

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
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No. 281.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 21, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

PAT MALLOY;

—C O R L—

AN IRISH BOY'S PLUCK AND LUCK.

By ALLYN DRAPER.



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PAT MALLOY;

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CHAPTER I.

HE WAS DRIVEN FROM HOME.

Many of the neighbors wondered how old Pat Malloy had ever won his wife.

He was a large, rough, morose, ignorant Irishman, while she was a gentle, ladylike person, and she still bore traces of that refinement and beauty which must have adorned her early life.

The Malloys lived on a small farm on the lower Potomac, some twenty miles below Washington, and they had very little intercourse with their neighbors.

Pat Malloy was a man of fifty but he looked ten years older at least, and it was also apparent that vexation of spirit or some secret care was eating away the strength of his body and of his mind.

Mrs. Malloy was at least ten years younger than her husband, yet the lines of care and sorrow were visible on her comely brow, and she acted and spoke like one who had very few joys and hopes in life.

Young Pat Malloy was their only child, and he was his mother's only pride and hope—almost.

From his very earliest childhood, Pat could not remember having ever received a kind word from his grum father, while abuse and blows were showered on him in plenty.

His gentle mother, on the other hand, endeavored to make up for the old man's brutality by treating her bright boy with the utmost kindness, and she not only nourished his body by depriving herself of all little luxuries for his sake, but she improved his mind by instructing him in history and deportment, as well as in all the scholastic attainments which she had herself acquired.

When young Pat was about seventeen years of age, the neighbors remarked that he possessed much of the beauty and grace of his mother, together with the manly proportions and strength of his father.

The boy had then begun to realize that there was something more than peculiar about his morose and tyrannical father.

If old Pat Malloy had dwelt far away in the backwoods, he could not have kept himself more secluded, as he never visit-

ed the city or the neighboring villages, he avoided all his neighbors, and he was positively rude to any stray strangers who chanced to visit his place.

Young Pat then began to suspect that there was something mysterious in the early life of his parents. He feared that his morose father had committed some crime which preyed on his mind, and he sometimes thought that Malloy was not their real name.

Although the old man had a strong accent that would never wear off, he never spoke of his Irish home, while he would now and then allude to places in England when conversing with his wife.

Young Pat led a very unhappy life on the farm, as he was compelled to do all the drudgery, put up with the untiring and brutal abuse of his father, and he was compelled to steal forth whenever he sought enjoyment with companions of his own age.

One may well imagine how a high-spirited lad would chafe and rebel under such treatment, and those who are blessed with good and gentle mothers can readily understand why Pat did not desert his home and seek his fortune among strangers.

The boy was thoroughly devoted to his sweet mother, and he was willing to bear almost any agony for the sake of living with her.

But it was destined that the kind mother and the good son should soon part—and perhaps forever.

One day in the spring of the year old Malloy attacked his son, in the presence of three or four neighbors, for some very trifling mishap to one of his horses.

Burning with shame and indignation, the boy defended himself so far as to ward off the rude blows aimed at him, and in doing so he chanced to hurl the passionate old man to the ground.

Wild with rage, old Malloy sprang to his feet and ran to seize an ax, swearing that he would take his son's life, and the neighbors called on young Pat to fly at once.

The boy did fly to the house, while some of those present seized the infuriated man, dragged the ax from his grasp and held him until his son was safe for the time.

Mrs. Malloy witnessed the painful scene from the doorway

of the little farmhouse, and she received her son with sighs and tears, saying:

"My poor boy, much as it grieves me, I must tell you that you cannot live here any longer. I know your father only too well, and I am certain that he will never tolerate you here again."

"It is only for your sake that I stay at all, mother," replied Pat, in sad tones.

"I know it, my son; but for my sake and your own, you must fly now, never to return while he lives."

As the afflicted woman thus spoke, she cast an anxious glance toward the spot where the good neighbors were still holding the passionate man.

Pointing to the stable, she continued:

"Get out the black horse as quick as you can, while I collect some of your clothes for you and what money I can. I beg of you to fly for my sake, and my best blessings be with you wherever you go."

"But won't he abuse you when I am gone, mother?"

The good woman drew herself up proudly, and her eyes flashed with unwonted fire as she replied:

"He dare not abuse me, my dear boy. Away with you now, and out with the horse."

Young Pat hastened to obey his mother, and the black horse was soon ready for the road.

The neighbors were still holding the infuriated man despite his savage struggles.

The horse was scarcely ready, when Mrs. Malloy appeared at the door again with a small bundle, a purse containing a few dollars and a little locket.

Handing the purse and the bundle to her son, she placed the locket around his neck, saying:

"Wear that forever for my sake. Mount and away now ere he breaks loose, and my fond blessings be with you wherever you go."

One glance back at his relentless father, one loving embrace from his tearful mother, and young Pat Malloy sprang on the horse to ride out on the road.

On seeing the boy ride away on the good black horse, the friendly neighbors at once released the passionate man, who sprang on another animal near him and started to give chase, crying:

"I'll catch him and give it to him!"

As old Pat Malloy dashed by the house his gentle wife raised her voice in thrilling tones, crying:

"Beware, cruel man, and don't go too far, or I will forget my vow."

The words thus spoken had an almost instant effect on the furious man, as he pulled up the horse under him on the instant and turned him into the orchard, muttering:

"I'd like to beat the life out of the young rascal, but I mustn't go too far. I have driven him away forever, and that is one consolation."

The morose man then hastened into a neighboring wood, and his gentle wife did not see him for two days after.

In the meantime young Pat Malloy rode away with a sad heart, and many were the anxious glances he cast back at the old farmhouse, which was not to be his home thereafter.

As he was a proud, high-strung young fellow, he scorned to appropriate the good horse under him to his own use, and on reaching the nearest village he sent him back to the farm in charge of a friend, who also bore a message to his mother.

By means of that messenger Pat informed the kind creature that he intended to make his way to Washington on foot; that he would seek employment there, and that if he did not succeed that he would either enlist in the army or proceed to New York.

On reaching Washington the brave boy found that it was not easy to get employment unless backed by influential

friends, and he trudged on to Baltimore, hoping to find a ship there on which he could get a place either as a cabin boy or under instructions as a sailor.

As young Pat had made several excursions down the Potomac in a fishing sloop belonging to a friend, he had acquired a great taste for the sea as well as some crude knowledge of the duties of a sailor.

After lingering in Baltimore for two days without meeting with any success, he resolved to tramp on to Philadelphia, and from thence to New York City.

Being too proud to beg on the way, Pat Malloy hoarded his little capital as carefully as possible, as he only purchased the simplest food necessary, and he often slept in a barn or outhouse on the wayside.

After about two weeks of weary tramping the adventurous lad found himself in the great city of New York with only fifty cents in his possession.

He then strolled along the docks on the East River in the hope of securing some humble position on one of the sailing vessels lying there.

There was something very pleasing and attractive in the face of the boy, and as he wore his dark hair very long, in the Southern fashion, he was often taken for a cowboy from the West.

Years of early toil and suffering had also given that countenance an expression denoting that the youth must have been twenty years of age at least, when he was actually only in his eighteenth year.

After seeking employment in several vessels without meeting with any success, Pat Malloy encountered a genial skipper who received his application with some attention.

The skipper inquired if Pat had ever been at sea, and the boy replied in a candid manner, telling of his experiences on the fishing boat on the Potomac River.

Captain Hardy then smiled as he asked:

"Were you born in Virginia?"

"My father and mother are Irish, sir, and I believe I was born in England. I was brought up on the Potomac River as long as I can recollect."

The genial skipper smiled again when he heard the youth's name, and he concluded by engaging him as a landsman, which meant that he was to be under instructions for some time.

Captain Hardy was in command of a splendid trading clipper which was then bound for Liverpool and from thence to China.

Pat slept on board the vessel that night, and before she sailed on the following day he wrote a letter to his dear mother.

Although the youth spoke in the soft accents bequeathed to him by his mother, he had acquired a touch of the Irish brogue from constant association with his rough father; and the latter fact, together with his name, caused his shipmates to regard him as an Irish greenhorn.

Pat Malloy did not take the trouble to undeceive them, but they were not many days out at sea when the tall and sturdy youth proved that he would not only become a good sailor, but that he could take his own part in other ways besides.

The voyage was prosperous enough until the good ship neared the Irish coast, when a terrible storm arose, and she was driven toward the rock-bound shores of Galway.

CHAPTER II.

WRECKED ON THE IRISH COAST.

It was night when the fated vessel struck on a reef, and the wild waves dashed over her sides before a single lifeboat could be launched.

Pat Malloy found himself struggling in the merciless waves, and as he was a splendid swimmer, he instinctively struck out for the dark rocks frowning before him.

After a desperate struggle the youth found his strength giving way, and he sank under a great wave that was sweeping toward the shore.

Pat Malloy then realized some of the sensations of a drowning man, when his head struck on a rock and he lost all consciousness.

When the shipwrecked youth recovered his senses again it was broad daylight, and he found himself reclining on a bed in a small room.

After staring around for some moments he said to himself:

"I must have been saved from the waves by some of the people on the coast, and they have taken care of me."

He then felt a sharp pain in the side of his head, and on raising his hand to the spot he found that there was a bandage thereon.

After reflecting for a few moments and listening awhile to the murmur of voices in an adjoining room he raised his voice and asked:

"Where am I?"

An old woman of the peasant class entered the room at once and addressed Pat in kindly tones, saying:

"Ye are safe with friends, me poor boy. Just be aisy and take another sleep, after I give you a drink."

Pat Malloy felt that he had sleep enough, and as he was anxious to hear about his shipmates, he said:

"I thank you very much, my good woman, but I do not feel sleepy now. Will you be kind enough to tell me how many of my shipmates were saved?"

The old woman shook her head in a sorrowful manner ere she replied:

"Don't fret, my poor boy, for it is thankful ye ought to be to heaven that ye are not with all the others."

"Then they are all lost?"

"They are all gone save yourself, and ye were low enough whin me son dragged you out of the cove."

A deep sigh escaped from poor Pat Malloy on hearing the fatal intelligence, as he had become deeply attached to Captain Hardy and his shipmates, and he realized his own forlorn position at the moment.

Without waiting for further questions, the kind old woman retired from the room and returned very soon with a bowl of warm milk.

Pat Malloy then learned that he was the guest of a poor farmer living near the coast; that he had been saved from the waves by the farmer's only son, and that his preserver's name was Shamus O'Connor.

The shipwrecked youth had received a severe cut on the head when striking the rock, but the wound had been dressed by the kind people who offered him shelter, and it did not promise to be dangerous.

Nothing could exceed the kindness or hospitality of that poor Irish family to the guest thus thrown on them by the waves, and in a few days Pat Malloy was able to walk around the little farm with young Shamus O'Connor, who was a sprightly lad about two years older than himself.

When the poor boy spoke of leaving them to seek a ship in the neighboring seaport, the good people would shake their heads and remonstrate with him, saying:

"Don't think of leaving us until you are quite strong and hearty, and sure you are no trouble to us at all."

Pat Malloy would not be in any hurry to leave his kind friends if he had the means of repaying them, but he had not more than thirty cents in his pocket when he was washed ashore, and the golden locket which his mother had given him.

He could not bear to think of parting with that locket, even if his kind friends would accept it, which was extremely doubtful.

The family consisted of the old lady, who first appeared to the boy; her husband, who was known as old Shamus O'Connor; their son, before mentioned, and a lively young girl about Pat's own age.

Although they appeared to be very poor and worked hard tilling the little farm, the observant young stranger could perceive that they were happy and contented.

As Pat was well acquainted with work on the farm, he insisted on taking a hand with the men as soon as his health was restored, and it was not long before he felt as much at home with the kindly people and their neighbors as if he had lived among them all his life.

As the clothes which he had worn when cast on the rocks were in tatters after his rescue, young Shamus O'Connor insisted on his wearing a spare suit of his own.

When thus arrayed, and when his health was completely restored, the young sailor accompanied his young friends to the dances and merrymakings of the neighborhood, where he was introduced as a cousin from a distant part of the country.

Weeks and months went by, and Pat Malloy still lingered with his preservers, who would not listen to any proposal on his part for leaving them until he received aid from his mother in America.

Pat did not write to his mother until he was over a month in Ireland, as he had hoped to work his passage back again in some western bound vessel.

About five weeks after mailing the letter he received an answer from his kind mother which contained a draft for ten pounds, the kindest expressions of gratitude to the friends who had preserved him, and some ominous words of warning which startled Pat a good deal.

The words of warning ran as follows:

"Do not imagine, my dear son, that I wish to mystify or alarm you, but I do warn you to hasten away from the spot where you were rescued as soon as possible after receiving this letter. There are people residing in that neighborhood who would injure you if they suspected who you really are, and it is a strange fate indeed that has thrown you on that part of the Irish coast.

"I would say more to you were it not that I am under a vow of silence until the death of your father. I will only request you to leave the place at once. Do not show the locket I gave you to any one in Ireland, and burn this letter as soon as you read it."

The warning thus given by his gentle mother mystified the young fellow very much.

While he had long realized that his mother was superior to his father in birth and education, and while he suspected that some dark stain was on the old man's character, he had never received any intimation from either of them as to their early history.

Pat Malloy did not know that he had another relative in the world, and he could not even tell what part of Ireland his parents came from.

As he was a fearless and adventurous youth, he felt very much like remaining in the neighborhood in order to make some private inquiries that might tend to solve the mysterious allusions of his mother, but he was a dutiful son, and he resolved to obey her.

The letter was burned at the first opportunity, the locket was placed in the lining of his vest for safety, and he announced his early departure to his kind friends.

Pat Malloy also insisted on each of the family accepting a present from him, while they resolved to celebrate his departure by a farewell party.

As the young stranger had become a general favorite with the boys and girls in the neighborhood, the little farmhouse was crowded with guests on the night of the farewell party.

While Pat Malloy was sad enough at the thought of leaving his kind friends, he entered into the merriment of the occasion with his whole heart and soul, and many of the pretty country girls there sighed more than once at the prospect of his soon bidding them adieu forever.

When the fun was its height a young man mounted on a fine horse rode into the farmyard, where he was received by the O'Connors with every mark of respect and attention.

The young man thus presenting himself was dressed in the height of fashion, and Pat Malloy soon learned that he was Oscar Talbot, the only son of Sir Rudolph Talbot, the owner of an extensive estate in the neighborhood, including the farm rented by the O'Connors.

The elegant young gentleman was not at all backward, however, in joining in the dancing, and he made himself very agreeable with the young girls.

Pat Malloy was not introduced to Oscar Talbot, but he soon noticed that the young gentleman was making some inquiries about him, drawing Mrs. O'Connor aside for that purpose.

After dancing for over an hour the young gentleman rode away again, and the good lady of the house informed Pat that her landlord was more than particular in his inquiries about him, while she concluded by saying:

"I told him the truth about you, of course, my boy, and he offered to lend you money to go back home, but I told him that your mother had sent you enough already."

"That was right, Mrs. O'Connor," responded Pat, "but I thank the young gentleman all the same."

On the following afternoon Pat Malloy bade adieu to his kind friends, having promised them to pay them a visit at some future day, if possible.

Young Shamus O'Connor accompanied his friend to the nearest village, from whence the sailor boy intended to take the mail coach to the seaport city.

Pat Malloy did take the mail coach, but they had not proceeded more than two miles from the village when the vehicle was upset, and the unfortunate lad was flung over into a deep ditch, where he remained insensible for some time.

When he did recover his senses and managed to crawl out of the ditch he found that the coach had proceeded on its way, and that he was left alone in the lonely country with the darkness of night around him.

Pat Malloy stood on the road for some moments, not knowing which way to turn toward the village he had left, and he rubbed his head as he spoke aloud, saying:

"This is very unfortunate, and it seems to me that I am doomed to be in hard luck."

After looking carefully around as if in search for a light to guide him, the unfortunate youth perceived a glimmer in a wood about half a mile along the road.

Picking up the bundle and stick, which was all the luggage he possessed, he trudged along toward the light with a heart light enough, considering his late mishaps.

Pat Malloy was a plucky youth and a philosopher as well, and the slight accident he had encountered did not trouble him very much.

As the light grew nearer and nearer, he soon perceived that it came from the small cottage in the wood a little distance in from the road.

An old stone wall bounded the wood on one side of the road, and the young wanderer leaped over it without the slightest hesitation. Not bestowing a thought that he was intruding or trespassing, he advanced to the cottage and knocked at the door.

Pat Malloy could then hear a voice inside, crying:

"Who in the mischief is that?"

It was a rough and disagreeable voice, and it smote on the young wanderer's ear as if warning him to retreat on the instant.

Before he could retreat, however, if such a thought had entered his mind, the cottage door was opened, a gun was presented at him, and the same gruff voice demanded:

"Who are you and what is your game here?"

Pat Malloy was a little astonished at the very peculiar reception he received, but he was not in the least alarmed.

Drawing back a single step only he replied:

"Put up your gun, friend, as I am not a robber. I am only an unfortunate traveler who met with an accident by the upsetting of the coach, and I called in here to inquire my way to the nearest village."

The man presenting the gun at Pat Malloy was staring at him from under a pair of heavy eyebrows, and the youth could perceive that he was a rough-looking customer with a countenance that would have been a passport in the vilest company.

Lowering the gun, the fellow grumbled forth:

"Hang your eyes, don't you know better than to trespass on private grounds? It is well for you I didn't see you coming over the wall, or you would have got a dose of lead. So you were on the coach, eh?"

Pat Malloy felt very much inclined to give the man a sharp rebuke, but he curbed himself and simply answered:

"I was, sir. I did not know that I was trespassing or I would not have come in here. Be kind enough to show me which is the way to the nearest village, and I will not trouble you any more."

"Let the lad come in," cried another voice from inside.

The fellow at the door drew back on the instant, saying: "Step in and rest yourself, and I'll soon put you on your way."

Pat Malloy entered the cottage without the slightest hesitation, although he did not like the appearance of the fellow before him, and the stick on which his small bundle was slung was the only weapon he possessed.

On entering the place the youth perceived another rough-looking customer seated at a table, and he also held a gun in his hands as if expecting an instant attack.

Without feeling the least alarmed at the hostile attitude of the second man, Pat Malloy addressed the pair of them in calm tones, saying:

"I beg you to excuse me for intruding on you, but all I ask of you is to tell me which way to turn in order that I may reach the village where I took the coach this evening?"

The man at the table stared at the youth for a moment or so before he abruptly asked:

"What is your name, youngster?"

"My name is Pat Malloy, sir."

"Then you were the young fellow who was stopping with the O'Connors for some time back?"

"Yes, I am."

The man seated at the table then arose and pointed the gun full at Pat Malloy while he nodded to the other as he grunted forth:

"This is our game."

Pat turned instantly to the other man, and when he saw that the fellow was aiming his gun at him also, he cried:

"What do you mean? Do you intend to kill me?"

Each of the men chuckled aloud, while one of them replied in mocking tones:

"We don't intend to hurt a hair of your head, youngster. We are going to treat you like a gentleman, but you must come with us."

Pat Malloy realized at once that the two ruffians were bent on mischief, and with an impulsive movement he sprang to the door, crying:

"You are a pair of cowards and rascals to treat a stranger in this manner. If you are playing a trick on me I want to tell you right here that you can't frighten me, if I am only a boy."

Chuckling aloud again, and dropping their guns on the table almost at the same instant, the two men sprang on the youth before he could use the stick against them.

When Pat Malloy felt himself seized by the two strong men he let fly with his hands and feet, but he was soon overpowered and borne to the floor, one of them placing a pair of handcuffs on his wrists, while the other put a bandage on his eyes as he grumbled forth:

"The youngster gave us some trouble, Jack, but we ought to be thankful that he did not slip through our hands."

CHAPTER III.

IMPRISONED IN AN OLD CASTLE.

When Pat Malloy heard the words thus muttered his mother's strange warning occurred to him on the instant, and he felt that the rascals who had seized him were instigated by some unknown enemy.

Even when overpowered and bound with the handcuffs, the plucky young fellow did not lose his presence of mind, and he raised his voice in the hope of attracting the attention of some person out on the road and yelled aloud:

"Help, help, murder!"

One of the rascals clapped his hand on the young fellow's mouth on the instant as he said to the other:

"Tie something over his mouth, Jack, and let us away with him."

The unfortunate youth managed to give several more cries for help before his assailants could gag him, but his appeals were not responded to.

They then dragged him out of the cottage and away through the wood, each grasping his arm tightly, as if they feared that he would yet give them the slip."

The brave youth did make several attempts to break away from his captors, and he continued to struggle in various ways as they dragged him along.

After proceeding for about half an hour, which seemed an age to Pat Malloy, the rascals dragged him into a courtyard, and from thence into a large old building.

They were then leading him up a broad stairway when the brave youth made another desperate effort at breaking away, and in the struggle that ensued they all fell and tumbled backward.

Pat Malloy's head struck heavily on the hard floor below, and he became insensible again.

The poor wanderer did not recover his senses again for some time, when he found himself stretched on a rude bed in a dark apartment.

Before he could fully comprehend the situation a door behind him was opened, and a light streamed into the room.

The bandage and gag had been removed from his mouth, and Pat Malloy could see a tall, bent figure approaching him.

The man wore a mask of black crape over his face, but the youth could note the piercing eyes glaring on him as he bent down over the bed.

As he was still striving to collect his thoughts, Pat Malloy remained silent, while the stranger scanned his features carefully, ere he asked him in hoarse tones:

"Do you know where you are, boy?"

The boy glared around the room for a moment and then looked up at the piercing eyes before he replied:

"How could I know? Who are you, and what is the meaning of bringing me here, anyway?"

"You are here to answer questions, and not to ask them," replied the stranger.

The youth attempted to raise himself in the bed, but he found that the handcuffs were still on his wrists, and he fell back on the pillow with an impatient groan, and crying:

"What in the thunder is the meaning of this treatment anyhow?"

"I told you that you were here to answer questions. Now tell me, what is your real name?"

"My real name is Pat Malloy."

"That's a lie, and you know it!" retorted the stranger, in angry tones. "We know what you are at, but we have the power to baffle you."

The brave lad smiled in derision as he responded:

I would like to know what you are at, for I'll be hanged if I can make out why I have been treated in such a manner tonight. If you take me for some other person, I suppose I must bear with it, but I'll tell you right here that my name is Pat Malloy, and that I never bore any other."

"How long will you stick to that statement?"

"Until I know better."

"Then stay here and rot, you stubborn fool."

The stranger then retreated abruptly from the room, and Pat could hear an iron door closing after him.

After pondering some time in the darkness, the persecuted youth muttered aloud:

"I'll be blamed if I know what to make of this. If it is an Irish joke it is a rough one on me, and I'd like to have the licking of the fellow who put the job up on me."

Pat then thought of his mother again and of the mysterious warning he had received from her, and he asked himself:

"Can it be possible that I am in the hands of those mother alluded to, and if I am what do they mean to do with me?"

After pondering for some time, and feeling that he was helpless in the dark with the handcuffs on his wrists, the youth pressed his head on the rough pillow and fell asleep soon after.

Pat Malloy had an easy conscience, and he slept soundly for some hours.

When he did awake he noticed that the handcuffs had been removed, and that some bread and water had been placed on a table near his bedside.

Before attempting to eat anything he looked around the room carefully, and he then said to himself:

"The mischief take me if I am not in a regular prison, as the walls are of solid stone, the door is made of iron, and there are strong iron bars on that high window up there."

Pat Malloy described his place of confinement very correctly in the few words, as he was secured in the tower prison of an old castle, and he would find it very difficult to escape therefrom.

After examining the room carefully the youth made up his mind to take matters quietly, and he sat down to eat the bread and water, as he muttered aloud:

"Well, I have heard that they do queer things in Ireland, but this beats all one could imagine."

Pat Malloy then proceeded to eat his breakfast with apparent relish, while he kept his eyes on the iron door in the hope of seeing a visitor appear.

The whole day passed, however, and no one appeared.

Before the night closed in, the youth drew the small bed under the window and placed the table on it, when he was able to peer out through his prison bars.

He could then note that he was in a very high tower; that the place was surrounded by a dense forest, and he could not perceive a living soul moving below him.

Without expecting much from it, the prisoner raised his voice and yelled aloud for help, but there was no response to the appeal.

It was dark night again, and Pat was sitting on the bed pondering over his peculiar position, when a small grating in the iron door was opened, and the voice of the masked stranger fell on his ears, crying:

"Are you stubborn as you were last night, youngster?"

"I am not stubborn at all," answered Pat, as he advanced to the door.

"Then tell me your real name."

"My real name is Pat Malloy, as far as I know."

"Do you still stick to that?"

"Of course I stick to it."

"Then stick there and rot."

The iron grating was then closed, and Pat could hear heavy footsteps withdrawing from the door.

On the following morning food and water were passed in to him through the grating by some one whose face he could not see, and the youth enjoyed another solitary breakfast.

More food was passed in to him in the evening, but the stranger did not greet him that night.

It was fully a week after before Pat heard that voice again, and the same question was put to him, while a similar answer was returned on the part of the prisoner.

Weeks and months passed away, and the brave youth would have pined to death were it not for his stubborn nature.

During those solitary days and nights Pat could not hear the sound of a human being around the castle, and his only amusement consisted in exercising with the chairs and table, pulling at the iron bars on the windows, and yelling therefrom three or four times each night and day.

Six months and over must have passed away, and Pat's black hair was flowing in ringlets over his shoulder, yet he never heard a human voice except the gruff tones of the jailer who handed him in his food.

Still the brave youth did not despair, as something whispered to him the state of uncertainty would not last much longer.

One night Pat heard an unusual commotion through the old building, and on looking out of the barrel window he could perceive the glitter of bayonets in the courtyard below, and several forms moving to and fro.

While thus engaged he heard the grating shoved aside, and he sprang down to the door in the hope of learning some important tidings:

"Are you there, Pat Malloy?" asked a strange voice, in subdued tones.

"I am here, friend," cried the youth, his heart beating with hope.

"A friend sent you these, then, and you ought to know how to use them," answered the person outside, as he thrust in a small coil of rope and a file. "If you have the courage to run the risk of being shot, and to climb down on the rope, good friends will watch for you until morning in the wood in front of the window."

Before Pat could ask a single question his unknown friend closed the grating, which could only be opened from the outside, and stole away silently.

With all the ardor of youth and courage, and with arms that had even increased in strength during his imprisonment, Pat Malloy set at work on the iron bars with the file, and before the hour of midnight he had succeeded in severing enough of them to enable him to crawl out of the window.

With the coil of rope at his side the prisoner peered out as if to measure the distance to the courtyard below, when he perceived a sentry walking to and fro almost below him and he drew back and prepared the means of descent, grinding his teeth as he muttered to himself:

"This may be an infernal trap, but I'll be blamed if I don't risk it, anyhow."

CHAPTER IV.

PAT'S STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY.

As the brave boy was fixing the rope for the descent he became more impressed with the idea that he was being enticed into a trap by his unknown friend, and he peered down into the courtyard again, as he muttered to himself:

"It would be an easy matter for the soldier below to pop me off as I slipped down on the rope, and I must study the matter over a little."

Pat Malloy had already secured an end of the rope to one of the iron bars, and he then sprang down on the bed and from thence to the floor, as he continued to mutter, listening carefully the while:

"Who knows but they may be listening to me outside the door now?"

As if in answer to the suggestion, his sharp ear caught the sound of a footfall outside the iron door at the moment, and the next instant the panel was moved back, while a voice fell on his ear, crying:

"Are you awake in there?"

The boy advanced to the door, as he promptly answered in his fearless tones:

"Yes, I am awake. What have you got to say to me now?" It was the stranger with the black crape over his face who had addressed him, and Pat had recognized the voice on the instant.

Speaking in gruff tones, the man asked:

"Are you not getting tired of acting like a stubborn fool?"

"I am getting tired of answering foolish questions. If you will explain what you are driving at I will answer if I can," answered Pat, in impatient tones.

"Do you persist in saying that your real name is Pat Malloy?"

"I persist in saying that I never knew I had any other name."

"What brought you here to Ireland?"

"I was a sailor and was shipwrecked off the coast, as you may easily learn by inquiring of those who rescued me."

"You allude to the O'Connors?"

"I do."

The man outside was silent for some moments, and he then abruptly asked:

"What was your mother's name?"

"I never heard it, as far as I can recollect, and I could not tell you."

"Is your father living?"

"He was when I last heard from him."

"When was that?"

"A week or so before your rascals dragged me here."

"Are you anxious to be set at liberty?"

"What a question to ask me. Of course I am anxious to be free again."

"If I set you at liberty will you take a solemn oath to leave Ireland at once and never return here while you live again?"

Pat Malloy did not answer at once, as he was thinking of the strange warning sent him by his mother, and he said to himself:

"There's some deep mystery in this business, and I am just the one to see it out. If I promise this fellow I will have to keep my word and leave the country forever, and blame me if I will do that."

"Why don't you answer me?" demanded the man outside. "If you swear to leave this country forever, I will set you free at once."

"And if I refuse?"

"You will stay in that room forever, and your people will never know what has become of you."

Pat Malloy was thinking of the rope, and he boldly answered:

"I will take my chances about that, and I'll see you hanged before I take the oath you want me to."

The man outside growled fiercely to himself ere he addressed Pat again, crying:

"Then rot where you are like a stubborn fool, and be hanged to you."

He then closed the panel and strode away.

A sigh of relief escaped from Pat Malloy as he turned to the window again, muttering:

"It wasn't a trap set for me after all, and I must have a true friend in the place. Now to get out into the wood at all hazards."

On climbing to the window again and peering out, the brave boy could still see the sentinel moving to and fro almost beneath him, but the presence of the soldier did not alarm him much, as he said to himself:

"The fellow will never think of looking up, and if I gain the ground in safety I will make a dash over the wall to the wood before he will have time to take good aim at me."

Having thus resolved, Pat Malloy examined the rope very carefully and assured himself that there was no flaw in it.

He also tested its strength by leaning his full weight on it inside the room while he said to himself:

"Although I feel pretty certain that my unknown friend means well, I must be careful, as it would not be pleasant to have my brains dashed out on the rough pavement below."

Thinking of his dear mother on the old Potomac, and muttering a simple prayer which she had taught him, the brave lad commenced the perilous descent, and he did not once cast his eyes down until he was within about twenty feet of the ground.

He then paused for a few seconds as he argued with himself:

"I had better wait till that soldier fellow turns to walk back again, and then I may slip over the wall without his seeing me. If he does make for me I will only have to show fight for it, for blame me if they are going to take me again so easy!"

When the soldier did turn again Pat went down hand under hand, but he soon found that the rope only reached to within about twelve feet of the ground.

Without pausing to measure the precise distance of the fall, the active young fellow cast one glance at the soldier and let himself drop as softly as possible while he muttered:

"Here goes for it, hit or miss, and miss it is."

The last words escaped him when he found that he had struck on a small bench or stool in the fall, and over on the ground he fell.

The sudden clatter attracted the attention of the soldier, and he turned and saw Pat Malloy springing to his feet, when he cried:

"Who goes there?"

The brave boy hesitated whether to spring for the wall or close with the soldier, when the latter advanced on him with his weapon presented, crying:

"Give an account of yourself or I will fire on you, wild Irishman."

Pat Malloy did not appear unlike a wild man at the moment, as his long hair was falling in disorder over face and neck, his face was soiled and haggard in appearance, and his large eyes were glaring with excitement.

Realizing that the soldier would be only too glad to fire on him at close range if he attempted to dash over the wall, Pat made a sudden spring over the presented bayonet and grappled with the fellow as he hissed into his ear:

"You or I for it, my good fellow, for blame me if you can take me prisoner."

The soldier sang out the alarm cry as he struggled with his wild-looking assailant, and his gun exploded at the same time.

The weapon had scarcely gone off when Pat Malloy tore it from the fellow's grasp, and he then struck him a blow with it that felled him to the ground as he hissed forth:

"I didn't care to hurt you, but you are only a blamed English soldier, anyhow."

Before Pat had finished the last words he was springing over the stone wall with the gun in his grasp, while he said to himself:

"I'll keep this to show fight if I am driven to it again."

The brave boy could then hear a loud commotion in the courtyard and in the castle, while a loud voice rang out, crying:

"Stand to your arms, soldiers, as the moonlighters are on us."

Pat Malloy heard that voice as he gained the shelter of the wood, and he said to himself:

"That is my friend with the black crape, and I only wish that we may soon meet again on more even ground. I wonder if my friend is around here and if the soldiers will be after me?"

The brave youth pressed on through the wood, but he did not hear any sounds of pursuit behind him.

He was not familiar with the condition of the country at the time, or he might have known that the soldiers were at the old castle in order to defend it from an expected attack of the moonlighters in the neighborhood, and not to sally out at great risk of being cut off in the wood.

In fact, the castle was in a state of siege at night, as the owner thereof was in very bad odor with his tenants, as well as with all the patriots of the surrounding country.

Keeping a sharp eye ahead and a keen ear open for those he had left, Pat Malloy moved cautiously through the wood; but he had not proceeded very far when he found himself suddenly surrounded by a party of men wearing pieces of black crape over their faces, one of whom saluted him and inquired:

"Where did you come from?"

Pat Malloy at once felt that he was among friends, and he laughingly replied:

"That is more than I can say, friend, as I don't know where I was."

One of the masked men sprang forward on the instant and flung his arms around Pat's neck, as he exclaimed, in familiar tones:

"Heaven be praised, if it isn't dear Pat Malloy himself, and no mistake. Oh, my dear boy, where in the world were ye all this time, and your mother in America, and all us dying about you?"

It was young Shamus O'Connor who thus addressed Pat Malloy, and the late prisoner answered:

"I can only tell you, my good friend, that I have been a prisoner in that old building back there ever since the night you left me on the mail coach, and it is all a mystery to me."

Exclamations of surprise burst from all those around him, and Shamus O'Connor eagerly asked:

"Did young Captain Oscar Talbot have any hand in taking you prisoner?"

"That is more than I can tell. Do you mean the young gentleman that called at your house the last night I was with you?"

"The very same, my dear boy."

"I never saw him since," replied Pat Malloy. "Now tell me what you make out of this business, Shamus, and what does it all mean?"

As the young fellow spoke he drew his Irish friend aside, the others making way for them in the most cordial manner.

Pat Malloy then learned the following items of interest from his young friend:

About three months before that date the O'Connors received a letter from Pat's mother, in which she stated that she had not heard from her son since he was supposed to have left Ireland, and that she was very much troubled about him.

Young Shamus answered Mrs. Malloy at once, stating all he knew about her son.

Another letter was then received from the good lady, in which she stated that she feared her son had met with foul play in Ireland; that his father had sold his farm on the Potomac and disappeared, leaving her half of the proceeds, and that she was then living in Washington in fearful suspense.

The anxious mother also sent young Shamus five hundred dollars, begging of him to use it in looking for her lost son in the neighborhood.

The last letter to young O'Connor concluded with these words:

"If my son has met any of the Talbots in your neighborhood, I beg that you will watch them in secret, as they are his enemies, if they chance to discover or suspect who he really is."

"I would go to Ireland myself in search of my son, but I am under a vow that prevents me until a certain event occurs."

"If you cared for my dear boy, as I feel you do, do not mention what I have written outside of your own family, and seek him, dead or alive, around the old woods of Talbot."

Having heard so much, Pat Malloy inquired:

"And were you looking for me here tonight, my good friend?"

"I am looking for ye all the time, and we would have made an attack on the old castle tonight in search of ye, only Sir Rudolph got wind of it, and he filled the place with soldiers."

"But you have a secret friend in the castle who aided me, Shamus?"

"That is more than I knew of, as all the people there are English or Scotch, for old Sir Rudolph won't trust his own people about him. But tell us what happened to ye at all, me poor boy, for ye look as if ye were buried in a tombstone since I saw ye last?"

Pat Malloy hastened to give his true friend an account of his strange adventures, which amazed Shamus, and he concluded by saying:

"And now, Shamus, I am going to stay here and see this affair to the end."

"And I'll stand to your back, my boy, and no mistake; and besides ye have the boys here and plenty more to help us for the Talbots are the worst tyrants in the whole country."

The honest young fellow then informed Pat that he had not spent a cent of the money sent to him by his mother, and that he must have it.

Shamus then introduced his young friend to his companions, several of whom Pat Malloy was already acquainted with.

After a brief consultation it was agreed that the escaped prisoner should take up his abode at the house of a wealthy young farmer who was one of the national leaders in the neighborhood, that he would assume a disguise which would baffle his enemies, and that he would devote his whole heart and soul in striving to solve the secret of his mysterious persecution.

As none of his friends could give him any information on the subject, Pat Malloy was very much puzzled about the un-

known who had assisted him in his escape from the old castle and he inquired of Shamus:

"Could it be that the young gentleman I saw at your house that night took pity on me?"

"Not at all, my boy," was the prompt reply. "Captain Oscar Talbot used to be popular enough about here awhile ago, but he has lately turned out worse than his tyrant father, if possible."

"Are they both at the old castle now, Shamus?"

"It is hard to say, as they have a fine place in the town, and they only use the old castle as a kind of hunting seat."

"Are they rich?"

"They are, and powerful and cruel as well. No poor man around here has a chance against them by fair means, and that is one reason you see us banded together as we are."

"Then it would be foolish for me to appeal to the law against them?"

"The height of folly, my boy. You must at them as they had at you. Have you any suspicion why they treated you as they did?"

"I can only imagine that they take me for some other person, or that there is some secret about my birth that I am not aware of."

"That must be it, Pat. The Talbots were always a strange, wild race, and queer stories are told about them in the past. We can only make inquiries at present, and see if we can trace your mother to them in some way."

"If I could only discover the person who aided me in escaping, I feel that he could solve the mystery a little, if he will."

"We'll try and discover him, my boy, but for the life of me I can't think who it can be at all. Let us get to Tom Bodkin's now, as you must be hungry and tired as well. You will be safe there and welcome also."

CHAPTER V.

PAT MALLOY IN DISGUISE

Early on the following morning Pat Malloy wrote and posted a letter to his mother, telling her of his adventures in the old castle, and assuring her that he intended to remain in Ireland and to carry out the fight against those who had attacked him without any apparent cause whatever, that he was aware of.

The young fellow also begged of his mother to send him as much information as possible without breaking the vow she had taken; and he was very particular in his inquiries as to his father's disappearance, and the means he had left behind for her support.

The young stranger was warmly received at the house of his new friend, who entered into all his plans for the future with hearty approval and rare intelligence.

Tom Bodkin, who thus received the youth stranger from America, was the leading spirit of the neighborhood in all movements against the oppressors of his country, and he had a mother who encouraged him in the patriotic work.

The young farmer was well educated, brave and brimful of resources, and he proved to be an excellent adviser and aid for Pat Malloy.

After making a confidant of his mother, who was a distant connection of the great Talbots, a disguise was agreed upon for the young stranger.

Pat Malloy rested quietly in the substantial farmhouse on the following day after his escape, while Tom Bodkin hastened away to the nearest city for a suitable disguise.

On the day after young Bodkin's return from the city he

rode around the country accompanied by an active old gentleman with a gray beard and whiskers, whom he introduced to his friends as his uncle, Richard Bodkin, from Wicklow, which place was many miles away from Galway.

As it was known to many of his neighbors that Tom Bodkin had an uncle of that name in Wicklow, none but his most confidential friends suspected that the active old stranger was the shipwrecked youth who had been such a great favorite with the boys and girls in the neighborhood.

During that ride around the country the young friends learned that Sir Rudolph Talbot had openly defied the moonlighters in the neighborhood, that the soldiers were still guarding the old castle, that all the members of the old knight's family intended to reside there for the time.

The two young men did ride as near the old castle as possible without trespassing on the private grounds, and Pat Malloy was hoping that he would meet either of the two rascals who had assaulted him in the little cottage.

They were not successful on that point, however, as all the followers of the castle appeared to keep in the background, as if fearing an attack by the moonlighters by day as well as by night.

After making as many cautious inquiries as possible through his young friend, Pat Malloy could not ascertain that his mother was in any way connected with the Talbot family, or that his father had ever lived in the neighborhood.

In the meantime young Shamus O'Connor was very busy in behalf of his friend, but the young fellow could not discover who it was that aided Pat Malloy in his desperate escape.

The more the young fellow pondered on that subject the more puzzled he became, and when he had time to think over the incident he felt convinced that the voice of his unknown friend was somewhat familiar to him.

Pat Malloy had an imaginative turn of mind, and after pondering over the subject for some time he said to himself:

"Could it be possible that my father came here to Ireland, and that he is the one who supplied me with the rope and file? It is true that he never showed me much kindness, but it may be possible that he is here now in disguise to aid me against the Talbots, or to set me free at least. I wish to goodness that I knew more of my parents' early life, and then I would not be moving in the dark as it were."

The young fellow was not impatient under the circumstances, and he resolved to wait and watch until he discovered some clew on which to work with good effect.

The moonlighters of the neighborhood did not accept the challenge given them by Sir Rudolph Talbot, as they were not fools enough to make an attack on the old castle while it was guarded by a large force of soldiers, and a week went by without a disturbance of any kind occurring in the neighborhood.

Pat Malloy still rode around in his disguise, and as he became familiar with the roads and bypaths near the dark woods of Talbot he would often wander there alone in the hope of meeting some of the inhabitants of the castle, and particularly the two rascals who had assaulted him.

The young rider had a splendid horse under him on all occasions, as Tom Bodkin could well afford to indulge his own taste in that line, and the rich young farmer was noted for his good stock.

One afternoon, as Pat Malloy was riding alone along the road near the cottage in the wood he noticed smoke issuing from the chimney, and he pulled up the good horse as he said to himself:

"Blame my eyes if I don't venture in there on some excuse and see if my friends are there."

Acting on the impulse, the young fellow faced the horse at the stone wall and over they went into the wood.

As he was riding toward the cottage Pat Malloy noticed a gateway a little to the right, from which a gravel path led up to the little building.

Taking the path he rode boldly up to the door of the cottage, crying:

"Hello in there!"

In answer to the salutation two men instantly appeared at the door, and Pat recognized them at once as the rough rascals who had assaulted him.

Staring up at the rider, one of them asked in gruff tones:

"What do you want, sir?"

Pat Malloy answered that he wished to inquire his way to Fairland, which was the nearest village.

The man pointed the direction as he replied:

"The road is right before you, sir. Will you tell us how you got in here?"

"By the gate, my good fellow."

Drawing a key from his pocket, the fellow grinned as he retorted:

"Then you will go out the same way, for hang me if I haven't orders not to open the gate for any one except the folks at the castle! I'd just like to see you leap back over the gate again."

Pat Malloy was scrutinizing the faces of the rascals in the most earnest manner the while, and he then replied in careless tones:

"It will be an easy matter for me to ride over the gate again if you do not care to open it."

The other man whispered to his fellow at the moment, and they both cast suspicious glances at the disguised youth, while the former speaker advanced to seize the bridle of the horse as he grumbled forth:

"We won't let you ride out so easy until we know what you are about. You will just come up to the castle with us, and Sir Rudolph Talbot will deal with you for trespassing in his private park."

Pat Malloy was very much inclined to use his heavy riding whip on the fellow, but he curbed himself and retorted:

"Let go my horse, you rascal, and I will go up to the castle with you if it is necessary."

The other man seized the bridle at the same time, as he cried:

"Come along and don't give us any of your impudence, as we don't stand any nonsense from you bog-trotters."

When assuming his disguise Pat spoke with a strong Irish accent, such as became a well-to-do farmer in the country.

The two rascals were about to lead the horse along the path, when Pat gave the animal a sharp touch of his riding whip, as he cried:

"Out of my way, you rascals."

The two fellows did get out of his way on the instant, as the spirited animal made a sudden bound forward and flung them sprawling on the ground.

The rider then pulled up his horse and faced him around, raising his riding whip as he cried again:

"If you touch my horse again I'll make you feel the weight of this bog-trotter's whip, you impudent scoundrels. Now I am ready to go up to the castle if you have any charge to make against me."

The two fellows sprang to their feet, and darted into the cottage without saying a word; but they appeared at the door again the next moment, each holding a gun in his hand.

Pointing the weapons at the rider, the former speaker cried, in sinister tones:

"Ride quietly up to the castle now, Paddy, or we will give you a dose of lead that may not agree with you."

"What's all this about?" cried a rich, feminine voice, as two young ladies appeared suddenly on the turn of the path.

The two men lowered their guns on the instant, and they doffed their hats to the young ladies, while one of them pointed to the rider as he replied:

"My lady, that fellow rode in here over the gate, and he tried to ride over us when we wanted to take him up before Sir Rudolph for trespassing."

The two young ladies advanced rapidly down the path, and they both stared at the disguised youth as the former speaker cried:

"How dare you come in our private grounds, sir, without being invited?"

And then, without waiting for a reply, she turned to the two men as she continued:

"Hasten up to the castle and request Sir Rudolph to come down here at once. Hand me one of the guns and I will see that he does not escape."

Pat Malloy was forced to smile as he saw the young lady seize the gun and point it at him, while she exclaimed:

"Don't you dare move or I will shoot you. We will show you that you cannot intrude on the grounds of Talbot without suffering for your audacity."

Pat Malloy smiled again and raised his hat in a gallant manner as he replied:

"I beg a thousand pardons, young lady, but upon my honor I meant no harm at all in coming in here to ask my way to Fairfield."

The other young lady smiled pleasantly at the apology thus offered, and addressed her companion, saying:

"Really, Eva, I do not think he meant any harm, and I would not point the gun at him, as it may go off."

"No fear of that while I have my hand on the trigger. Don't you attempt to stir, sir, or I will pull it on the instant."

The last word was scarcely uttered when a loud report rang out through the wood, and the horse made a sudden bound forward, flinging the rider to the ground.

The young ladies uttered terrified screams, and the one who held the gun dropped it as she exclaimed:

"Mercy on me, I have shot the man. Oh, gracious, I did not intend to fire."

The startled horse ran down to the gate and stopped there, and the terrified young ladies were bounding toward the fallen man, when he sprang to his feet with a merry laugh, crying:

"Don't be frightened, young ladies, as I am all right. Oh, great Jupiter!"

The last exclamation burst from Pat Malloy as his eye fell on his false beard and the wig lying on the ground beside him.

They had become detached from his head on falling from the horse, and there he stood before the two young ladies with his youthful face presented to them.

As that face bore the marks of his long confinement, however, he appeared to them to be a young man of twenty-one at least.

They both stared at him in amazement for a moment or two without uttering a word, when the one who had aimed the weapon at him addressed him in very haughty tones, saying:

"What is the meaning of this disguise, sir?"

"Are you certain that you are not injured, sir?" asked the other in very anxious tones.

Pat Mallow bowed to the last speaker, as he replied:

"I am not injured, young lady, thank you."

He then fixed his eyes on the other for a moment, as he said to himself:

"How in thunder am I going to get out of the scrape?"

Blame my eyes if she is not the finest girl I ever did see, and her black eyes go right through me."

"Why don't you answer me, sir?" demanded the young lady with the piercing black eyes. "Are you a spy on us, that you come in here in that disguise?"

Pat Malloy was a ready-witted young fellow, and as he had then time to collect his thoughts, he answered:

"I am not a spy on you, young lady, but I must confess that I am at present engaged in a business that compelled me to adopt a disguise."

"May we know your business, sir?"

"I am a detective officer from Dublin, and I am in search of a youth who mysteriously disappeared in this neighborhood some time ago."

Pat Malloy had an object in thus alluding to his own case, and he kept his eyes fixed on the young lady to note the effect of his words.

That scrutiny told him at once that she had no knowledge of his imprisonment, and her words confirmed the impression, as she asked:

"Did you expect to find the missing youth in the woods of Talbot, sir?"

"Not exactly, young lady."

The other young lady, who was a fair-haired, gentle-looking creature, had been listening attentively, and she then inquired with a smile:

"Will you be kind enough to tell us the missing person's name, sir?"

"His name is Patrick Malloy, miss, and he came from America."

A pleasant smile beamed on the face of the fair-haired girl as she asked:

"Is it the original Pat Malloy of the song, who declared that—

"Ould Ireland is my country,
And me name is Pat Malloy?"

Pat Malley laughed merrily before he replied:

"I cannot say that the youth I am after is the hero of the song, young lady. Pardon me a moment, as I must catch my horse before he strays through the wood. I will not attempt to run away, I assure you."

As the young man spoke he darted down the path and secured his horse, the young ladies following him at a slower pace.

Pat had picked up his false beard and wig before retreating, and he held them in one hand when the dark-eyed beauty approached him again and asked:

"Do you assure us, sir, that you are here on your own private business?"

"I solemnly assure you, young lady, that I am here on my own private business."

"Is it true, as the game-keeper said, that you rode over the gate coming in, sir?"

Having once made the assertion, Pat Malloy was too proud not to own to the truth, and he replied with a smile:

"That is true, young lady."

"Are you anxious to resume your disguise and remain unknown?"

"Most anxious, young lady."

Pointing to the gate and assuming a stern and dignified attitude, the dark-eyed beauty exclaimed:

"Then ride out as you came in, and we pledge ourselves that we will keep your secret."

"Mercy upon me, Eva," exclaimed the other, "you would not ask the young man to take such a fearful leap?"

"I would and I do. If he rode in that way he should be able to ride out again. Begone, sir, and if you will forget that

you ever met us we will not remember that we ever spoke to the old man who is in search of the famous Pat Malloy."

Pat Malloy bowed to the speaker, and then hastened to adjust his disguise.

He then sprang on the horse and turned him up the path, when he perceived several persons hastening down toward him.

Wheeling his horse toward the gate, he muttered to himself:

"It is a big jump, but I'll try it if I break my neck, and I don't want to meet old Talbot just yet. Now for it, my fine fellow, and don't you disgrace me before the two prettiest girls I ever saw."

The two young ladies drew back from the gate as the horse and rider went at it with a rush, and a faint scream burst from the fairhaired damsel as she saw them rising in the air.

Another moment and a joyous exclamation burst from the young lady, while the dark-eyed beauty cried:

"It was a splendid leap!"

Pat Malloy and his good horse did clear the gate in a gallant manner, and the young man only raised his hat to the ladies as he rode away along the road, muttering to himself:

"I'd give my eyes to meet them again, and especially the one with the black eyes. She must be Sir Rudolph Talbot's daughter, and I am very sorry for that, if she did put on airs."

Pat Malloy soon turned into a side lane, intending to cut across the country to the farmhouse, and he was still meditating on his late adventure with the young ladies, when a wild-looking man, far advanced in life, sprang out before him and held up a heavy stick, as he cried:

"Hold up, sir, as I want to speak to you."

Pat Malloy did hold up, muttering an exclamation of astonishment, as he had recognized the voice on the instant.

It was his own rough father who stood before him.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE DARK WOODS OF TALBOT.

It was old Malloy who stood before his disguised son in that lonely lane, but oh, how changed was the rough man in appearance since they had last met on the bank of the Potomac.

The old man's face had aged fifteen years at least, his thick hair and bushy beard were as white as snow, his eyes were wild and restless, and his garments were soiled and torn.

While young Pat was surprised enough over the strange encounter, he saw at once that his father had not recognized him, and he made up his mind that he would not betray himself until he discovered the old man's purpose in visiting Ireland.

Pulling up his horse and speaking in an assumed tone of voice, the young fellow asked:

"What do you want with me, old man?"

Old Malloy bent his wild penetrating eyes on the rider, advancing a few steps nearer at the same time as he replied, in blunt tones:

"I want to ask a few questions, sir, and I hope you will answer me without any trouble. Don't fear that I want to hurt you at all."

Young Pat Malloy was backing his horse at the time as he replied:

"I am not afraid of that, old man, but you might as well keep at a civil distance. What do you want to know from me?"

"Weren't you just up to Talbot castle?"

"I was not."

"But I saw you riding over the wall awhile ago."

"What of that? Couldn't I ride over the wall without going up to the castle?"

"That's very true," replied the old man, with a sigh. "What did you go into the wood at all for?"

"I don't see that it is any of your business, old man, but I will answer you. I went into the cottage to inquire my way to Fairfield."

"Then you are a stranger about here?"

"I am. Can I ask you what you want to know about the people of the castle?"

The old man cast a suspicious look at the disguised youth before he replied:

"It is no matter to you, sir, and I am sorry for troubling you at all, but I would like to ask you another question."

"What is that, friend?"

"Do you know Sir Rudolph Talbot?"

"I can't say that I do, as I have never met him to my knowledge."

"Do you know his son, Captain Oscar Talbot?"

"I believe I saw him once, but I am not acquainted with him at all. As I told you before, old man, I am a stranger in these parts and the Talbots are not my kind of gentry."

A fearful scowl appeared on the face of the old man, and he cast his glaring eyes in the direction of the castle as he hissed forth:

"They are not the kind of gentry that any honest man would want to do with, bad cess to them, but they will get their due some day, and that before long, either."

Having resolved to draw the old man out as much as possible without betraying himself, the disguised youth remarked in careless tones:

"I believe the Talbots are not very popular in this part of the country. I suppose you are one of their ejected tenants, old man?"

"Not I, sir, but I hate them worse than any of the poor people they put out on the roadside to starve."

"May I ask what they did to you?"

"'Tis no matter to you, sir. If you want to do a miserable man a kindness, please don't mention to anyone that you met such a person as me at all. I'd give my eyes to know who is up at the castle this evening."

Still speaking in careless tones young Pat Malloy answered:

"I did hear today that Sir Rudolph and all his family are there."

"Are you certain of that, sir?"

"I am pretty certain that Sir Rudolph himself is there, as I heard one of the gamekeepers mention it when I rode in to inquire my way."

The old man cast another very suspicious glance at the disguised youth as he inquired:

"If you were on your way to Fairfield, sir, how is that I find you riding through this lane, which will take you out of the way altogether?"

"Because I want to call at a farmhouse over here, and I learned that this lane is the nearest way to it. Do you live around here, old man?"

Pointing to the dark woods of Talbot, the old man exclaimed:

"There is where I live at present, hiding among the trees and bushes, and I don't want any other home in this world. Pass on now, sir, and be good enough not to tell any one that you saw me at all."

Young Pat Malloy did send the horse forward, but he pulled up again after passing the old man, and turned to address him, saying:

"If you are in need of any assistance I will be glad to give you a trifle."

The old man shook his head in a decided manner, as he cried:

"Oh, no, no; I am not a beggar at all, sir, and I don't want any assistance. But you might do me a favor, though, if I could make bold to ask you."

"What is it, my friend?"

"Do you know many of the people around here?"

"I have relations near here, and I have met a good many people connected with them since I came here a week ago."

"Did you happen to hear any one say anything about a young lad from America who was shipwrecked on the coast some months ago?" eagerly inquired the old man.

The young man pondered a few moments as if striving to recollect something before he replied:

"It seems to me that I did hear something about the young man who was shipwrecked on the coast. Do you remember his name, old man?"

"He was called Pat Malloy, sir. Don't think that I wish the lad any harm, and if you know anything at all about him, for mercy sake tell me where I can find him, or get word to him."

"Do you say that you are his friend?"

"Yes, yes, sir; I am the greatest friend he has in the world barring one. If you can send word to him, if you know where he is, for goodness sake tell him that a true friend is looking for him, and that he wants to meet him at once in the woods of Talbot."

Young Pat Malloy was on the point of betraying himself when an instinctive feeling prompted him to keep up the disguise for the time, and he replied in meaning tones:

"I may know something about the lad, but you may be certain that I will not tell you much about him, until I am sure that you are really his friend."

The old man dropped his stick on the instant, and held up his two hands in an imploring manner as he asked:

"Can you tell me if he is safe now, sir?"

"He is safe and with good friends."

"Do you know if he intends to remain here or to go back to his mother?"

"I can't tell you anything about his movements, but I may get him to meet you this very night."

The old man seized the disguised youth's hand as he exclaimed:

"Oh, sir, I swear to you that I am his best friend in the world next to his own mother."

"Can you give me any word or token for Pat Malloy to prove that?"

The old man bent his head to his breast and reflected for some moments ere he looked up again saying:

"I think I can, sir."

"What is it, then?"

"Tell him that the man who gave him the file and rope wants to meet him tonight in the woods of Talbot."

"What part of the woods, old man?"

Old Malloy pondered again for some time ere he replied, saying:

"Tell him to meet me, for goodness sake, by the big tree just back of the cottage where you were just now."

"At what hour?"

"Any time after dark. Oh, sir, are you humbugging me, or can you really send the boy to me?"

"Why should I humbug you, old man? I think I noticed the big tree behind the cottage, and I promise that young Pat Malloy will meet you there tonight an hour after sunset. Farewell now, and you may be certain that he will come."

Fearing that he would betray himself, and being very anx-

ious to remain unknown for the time, young Pat Malloy rode away through the lane, muttering to himself:

"Blame me if father isn't acting like a crazy man, and I don't know what to make of it. What could have brought him here, and what does he want to see me for? However, I am bound to meet him, and I will keep on with this disguise for the present unless the young ladies betray me, and I don't think they will."

Brimful of strange thoughts and misgivings, yet more determined than ever to pursue the course he had adopted, Pat Malloy galloped toward his friend's farmhouse.

On arriving there he told Tom Bodkin of his adventures, and concluded by saying:

"I will go and meet my father this evening. I will ride to the wood and put aside my disguise before going in there. Then I will know how to act with him thereafter, when I have heard what he has to say to me."

As Pat Malloy had no secrets from his young friend, Tom Bodkin was aware of the parting scene between father and son on the bank of the Potomac.

As the worthy young Irishman could not imagine that even a morose and passionate father could keep up a quarrel with such a youth as Pat Malloy he at once said:

"Go at once, by all means, my boy, and I will go with you as far as the wall. If your father was the one who gave you the file and rope, he must be better acquainted with the old castle than either of us, and you may rest assured that he has something very important to tell you."

"And so I think," said Pat. "Can you tell me who those young ladies were?"

Tom Bodkin colored a little as he replied:

"I think I can. The dark-eyed young lady is Miss Evaline Talbot, and the fair-haired girl is her cousin Dora Bodkin, who is a distant relation of mine."

"Indeed! Then you must be acquainted with the fair-haired young lady?"

Tom Bodkin turned away his head as he answered:

"Only slightly."

As young Pat Malloy was very deeply interested in the dark-eyed beauty, he asked:

"What kind of a person is Miss Eva Talbot? Is she always as proud and as haughty as she appeared this evening?"

"I don't know much about her personally, but she has the name of being the proudest young lady in the county, Pat, and don't you think of setting your cap for her?"

Pat burst into a merry laugh as he retorted, saying:

"It is not likely that I will, but blame my eyes if I am not bound to meet her again, and I won't appear to her then as an old man, either."

"Very good, my boy; but I would advise you to keep away from Miss Eva Talbot, as her dark eyes have worked mischief enough around here already."

Pat laughed at the warning, and then turned on the subject of the promised meeting with his father.

About sunset the two young men rode forth from the farmhouse, taking good care to arm themselves with good revolvers in venturing near the dangerous woods of Talbot.

On reaching the lane where he had met his father they turned in and dismounted, Tom Bodkin saying:

"We will tie the horses in here, and then I will walk around the road with you, as I don't fancy you meeting those two rascally gamekeepers again."

Pat Malloy touched the weapon in his pocket as he replied with a confident smile:

"If they should attempt to play the same trick tonight you can bet that they won't succeed."

On passing the gate leading up to the little cottage, Tom Bodkin took a seat under the wall, and Pat Malloy vaulted over it as he said to himself:

"I wonder if the old man is here now?"

The young fellow had removed his disguise for the meeting, and he was dressed as a young farmer.

On reaching the large tree behind the cottage Pat stared around in search of his father as he muttered aloud:

"I hope he will soon come."

A rustling in the branches above attracted the youth's attention at the moment, but before he could look up a dark form dropped from one of the limbs to the ground, and his father's familiar voice addressed him in subdued tones, saying:

"And so you did come to meet me."

Young Pat Malloy was about to reach out his hand when he noted the gruff tones, and he realized at once that his father did not regard him with any kinder feelings than when they last met on the Potomac, whatever his secret motive may be in seeking him in Ireland.

Drawing back a little the youth replied:

"Yes, I came to meet you, father."

Regarding his son with an angry scowl, the old man caught him by the arm and drew him deeper into the wood as he whispered into his ear:

"Did you come to take my advice?"

"I hope so, sir."

"Are you certain you will."

Young Pat hesitated to reply, as he felt that his father would attempt to play the tyrant over him again, and he did not care to make any rash promises.

The old man was silent also, until they reached a very secluded spot, when he stopped suddenly and bent his glaring eyes on his son as he demanded:

"Will you take my advice, boy, or not?"

"I would like to know what you have to say to me first, sir, before I make a promise."

"Then I command you to leave Ireland at once and never think of setting your foot here again. Will you do what I tell you without asking me any more questions?"

The young fellow drew himself up and stepped back as he replied in firm but respectful tones:

"I cannot do what you command, sir, as I have made up my mind to remain here in Ireland for the present."

Fiercer still was the gleam in the old man's eyes as he clutched his hands convulsively, and he glared at his son as he asked:

"Did you hear from your mother lately?"

"Not directly, sir."

"Did she send you word to remain here in Ireland?"

"She did not, sir. On the contrary, in the last letter I received from her she advised me strongly to leave Ireland at once."

"And won't you take her advice?"

"Not until I hear from her again, sir, as I have made up my mind to find out why I was imprisoned in that old castle so long. Was it you really gave me the means of escaping from it?"

The old man waved his hand impatiently as he replied:

"Never mind about that now. Did your mother tell you why you should leave here at once?"

"She did not, sir. She only warned me that I had secret enemies in the neighborhood, and she begged of me to leave here at once."

"And you wouldn't take your mother's advice?"

"I did take it, sir; but I was seized in that cottage over there after I met with an accident on the coach, and the next thing I knew I was a prisoner in the castle."

The wild old man muttered some fearful words to himself, ere he asked:

"What did they say to you up there?"

Pat Malloy then quietly informed his father about the

questions put to him by the man wearing the black crape on his face, and he concluded by saying:

"As I could not tell what he was driving at, sir, I could only answer and stick to it that my name was Pat Malloy. Will you tell me if it is my real name?"

Another fearful scowl appeared on the old man's face as he answered:

"Of course it is your real name. Do you doubt that I am your father?"

Pat Malloy hesitated to answer, as he could well reply that the old man had never treated him as a son.

The scowl darkened still more on the old man's face, as he demanded:

"Do you doubt that I am your father, boy?"

"Why should I doubt it, sir?"

"Then you mean to say that you won't leave Ireland when I ask you?"

"I have written to my mother, sir, and I must wait until I hear from her."

The old man flew into a fearful rage and he could only hiss forth:

"Then wait and be hanged to you, if you want to have me hung."

The excited old man was then about to plunge into the wood, when the young fellow sprang forward and seized him by the arm, as he demanded:

"What do you mean by that, sir?"

Flinging him aside in a rude manner the old man darted away, as he responded:

"You will find out what I mean by it soon enough if you don't do what I tell you."

Young Pat Malloy darted after the old man and seized him by the arm again, saying:

"Why can't you explain to me, sir?"

"Because I can't and won't. If you must remain in Ireland keep away from these dark woods hereafter, and beware of the Talbots. Don't attempt to stop me now or I'll knock you down."

Then casting another fierce scowl at his son the old man darted away into the wood.

Young Pat Malloy did not attempt to follow the old man again and he stood under a tree staring in the direction in which he had disappeared as he muttered to himself:

"The old man is crazy and no mistake. What can he mean by saying that I may be the cause of bringing him to the gallows? I did suspect that father had committed some crime long ago, but isn't it strange that he should act as he does now? What can I do for him, and how am I to act in the strange position I find myself?"

While thus muttering Pat Malloy turned to join his friend, when his father suddenly appeared before him again, saying:

"Keep on here if you must, stubborn boy, but it is well that you should know me if you should see me again."

As the old man spoke he drew the false white beard from his face, and the young man started on noticing the haggard appearance it presented on seeing it for the first time without a beard of any kind.

The withered countenance presented a very youthful appearance were it not for the deep lines on the brow and the wrinkles around the eyes, while the long white hair flowing on the shoulders gave him a most striking aspect.

Before the young fellow could make a single remark his father inquired:

"Where can I see or hear from you when I may want you?"

"A letter addressed to Tom Bodkin, of the Blue Glen Farm, will be always sure to find me, sir, but don't put my name on it if you please."

"Very well. If you don't clear out, as I warn you to, you will soon hear from me."

The strange old man darted away again, and young Pat returned to his friend in a more perplexed state of mind than ever.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ROCKS BY THE SEA.

Pat Malloy had another confidential talk with Tom Bodkin on their way home that night, and they both agreed that old Malloy was acting like a crazy man.

Young Bodkin also concluded that the old man must have some old grievance against Sir Rudolph Talbot, and that he must have been connected with that family in some way in former days.

While they were both anxious and eager to solve the mystery, they felt that they were powerless for the time, and they agreed to wait in patience until they would hear from old Malloy again.

Tom Bodkin then confessed that he was deeply attached to the fair-haired young girl then residing with the Talbots, and that serious obstacles had been thrown in the way of their coming together again.

"She is only my third cousin, you know, Pat," said the young farmer, "and I sometimes thought that she liked me well enough to marry me, although I am not her equal; but Sir Rudolph Talbot is fearfully opposed to me because I do not think as he does on national affairs, and I am only what is called a gentleman farmer."

"But what has the old fellow to do with the young lady?" asked Pat Malloy.

"He is her guardian and first cousin. Miss Dora Bodkin is quite rich, and it is whispered that Captain Oscar Talbot wants her to be his wife."

"If the young lady likes you, my friend, why don't you run away with her and pitch the Talbots to the mischief?" asked the impulsive young Irish-American.

Tom Bodkin laughed heartily at the suggestion, and then replied:

"If we lived fifty years ago I might try that same, but it is out of the fashion now, and I am afraid that she would not be willing to run away with me."

"Then try her as soon as you can, for you know that a faint heart never won a fair lady."

"You can wager your life that I will try the first chance I get, Pat. If I could only meet her away from the Talbots all may be well, but I can never go to see her at either of their places."

As Tom Bodkin was a handsome, manly young fellow, who could pass as a gentleman in any society, Pat Malloy felt that he would succeed in his love enterprise, and he told him as much.

Pat's thoughts were running on the dark-eyed, haughty beauty at the same time, and he said to himself:

"Blame my eyes, if Tom and I must not make up some plan for meeting the two young girls again, even if we had to make some excuse for paying a visit to that dangerous old castle."

Another week went by and nothing of any importance occurred in the neighborhood.

Sir Rudolph Talbot had dismissed all the soldiers from the old castle, declaring that he would defy the moonlighters with his own armed retainers.

Pat Malloy did not hear from his father in a direct manner, but he did hear about a certain wild old man who had

recently joined the moonlighters on the mountain, and who was striving to incite them to an attack on Talbot Castle.

The moonlighters had their secret orders, however, from the leader who controlled their movements, and the Talbots were not molested for the time.

As both Tom Bodkin and Pat Malloy were very anxious to see the young ladies of the castle again, the young fellows made several excursions to the neighborhood of the old castle in the fine evenings, and they soon discovered that the objects of their admiration were in the habit of strolling out to a neighboring bay, accompanied by old Sir Rudolph and his son, Captain Oscar Talbot.

And emboldened by the fact that the ground on which they thus strolled did not belong to the Talbots, the young men determined to seek an interview with the young ladies, and Pat Malloy volunteered to draw off the young captain and the dark-eyed beauty at least, so that his friend would only have to deal with the old gentleman and the girl he loved.

They sailed out one evening from the farmhouse on two of Tom Bodkin's best horses, and Pat Malloy wore his usual disguise.

Tom Bodkin, on the other hand, was arrayed in his best riding costume, and he did not attempt to disguise himself in any manner.

The two young men arrived on the rocks overlooking the bay toward the close of the evening, and, securing their horses in a small grove in the neighborhood, they strolled fearlessly out on the cliff.

After walking about for some time, they were both delighted to perceive four figures advancing on them from the woods of Talbot, and Pat Malloy said to his friend:

"Your young lady is walking with the old knight, Tom, and that is a good sign for you."

The young farmer smiled as he gazed at the pretty form in the distance, and then replied:

"Yes, I am sure that Dora does not like Captain Talbot, and I hear that she avoids him whenever she can. Now what would you advise me, boy?"

The folks from the castle had not yet perceived the two young friends as they were sheltered behind a huge rock overlooking the bay, and Pat Malloy replied:

"You see that the old gentleman is walking ahead with your cousin? I suppose you are not much afraid of him?"

"Indeed, I am not."

"Well, then, you remain here, and I will advance to meet them. Then see if I don't manage to keep Captain Talbot and his sister back while you have a chance of speaking to your cousin."

"But you will get into trouble with Captain Rudolph, my boy."

"Don't you trouble yourself about that," answered Pat Malloy, as he stepped out from behind the rock and advanced across the cliff toward the people coming from the castle.

It was a bright, clear evening, and the young people were enjoying the breeze and the magnificent view from the high cliffs.

Pat Malloy sauntered along in a leisurely manner, after the fashion of an old gentleman taking a little exercise and an airing, and as he passed Sir Rudolph Talbot and the young lady he raised his hat in a respectful manner, casting a keen glance at the old knight at the same time as he said to himself:

"I'll bet my life that is the man who wore the black crape on his face. Now to keep back the others, and to have another good look at the dark-eyed beauty."

Captain Talbot and his sister were some distance behind the others, when the disguised youth approached them.

Pat Malloy raised his hat again, and he was passing on

without pretending to recognize the young lady, when he turned suddenly and addressed her brother, saying:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but will you be kind enough to tell me if you know the old gentleman walking ahead of you?"

Both brother and sister paused to stare at the pretended old man, and the haughty girl recognized him on the instant.

Staring at him in an impudent manner, Captain Talbot replied in haughty tones:

"I do know the old gentleman, sirrah. What would you like to know about him?"

"I would like to know who he is, sir."

"Ah, indeed, and who are you, pray?"

Pat Malloy was glancing over his shoulder at the others, and he saw that his friend had come out from behind the rocks, and that he was addressing the old knight and the young lady.

Pat Malloy could also perceive that the old gentleman was acting as if in a furious temper, and while the young fellow could not overhear the words at the distance, he felt that he was denouncing his young friend for daring to approach them.

Captain Talbot and his sister did not perceive the actions of their father as they had both turned to address the old stranger.

Eva Talbot was staring at the disguised youth in a haughty manner, as if she meant to say to him:

"I am certain that you have met us in order to speak to me again, but I despise you too much to have anything to say to you, you presumptuous fool."

Pat Malloy at once replied:

"My name is Richard Bodkin, sir, and I am at present on a visit to the house of a worthy young gentleman who happens to be my nephew, and whose name is Thomas Bodkin."

"The young puppy," sneered the soldier.

The disguised youth advanced a step or two toward the fellow on hearing the insulting words as he exclaimed:

"How dare you call my nephew a puppy! If he were here he would thrash you within an inch of your life. Who are you, that I may tell him where to find you and to chastise you as you deserve?"

Before the young soldier could reply a loud yell of rage was heard from the cliff beyond, and on turning his eyes in that direction Pat beheld a scene that fairly startled him for a moment.

A struggle must have taken place between Sir Rudolph Talbot and Tom Bodkin, as they were both bare-headed at the moment.

The young farmer was standing near the edge of the cliff holding his young cousin by the hand, and endeavoring to draw her back with him while he poured burning words of love into her ear.

At a short distance beyond the old knight was reclining on a large rock, and standing over him was Pat Malloy's father.

The old knight appeared to be half stunned by the fall he had received, as he was leaning on his elbows and staring helplessly around him.

On hearing the cry of alarm, Captain Talbot and his sister started toward the scene, uttering cries of indignation, but the active Pat Malloy darted ahead of them as he cried to his friend:

"Take her away now, my good nephew, and I'll tend to the others."

As the young fellow drew nearer to his friend, he could perceive several figures climbing up from the rocks below, and he saw his father, without the false beard on his face, standing over old Sir Rudolph with folded arms, as he addressed him in thrilling tones, crying:

"Now, you old tyrant, we have met face to face again after many long years, and I am bound to have it out with you at last!"

CHAPTER VIII.

PAT MALLOY IN DANGER AGAIN.

Young Tom Bodkin was so excited in his interview with his cousin Dora that he scarcely noticed what was passing around him on the cliff, when his young friend, Pat Malloy, sprang on the scene, followed by Eva Talbot and her brother.

The young lady became fearfully excited as she saw her father reclining against the rocks and the wild-looking outlaw standing over him in a threatening attitude, while up from the path below darted several men, who did not appear to be very friendly to the owner of Talbot Castle.

Young Oscar Talbot hesitated on reaching the scene of action, and he turned for a moment toward the wood to yell as loud as he could for help.

His spirited sister continued to advance, however, as fast as she could, and she soon seized Pat Malloy's father and pushed him back, while she cried:

"How dare you touch my father, you insolent rascal? If I had a weapon I would take your life!"

The disguised Pat Malloy only paused to speak a few words to his friend, Tom Bodkin, when he also sprang to protect the old man, crying:

"Don't strike a foe when he is down."

The half-crazed old man glared at his disguised son and Eva Talbot in a savage manner ere he burst out again, crying:

"I will not touch him now, but he will soon feel the weight of my arm again, and for the last time."

Old Malloy then darted down the cliff as he cried to those who were hastening up:

"Let us away now, boys, as I hear the tramping of the dragoons in the road below."

The moonlighters followed the old man, and as young Pat Malloy looked down after his father he said to himself:

"The old man has sense enough in some things, and he knows when to fly from danger. The mischief take me if I know how to take him at all, but I suppose I will soon know what he is up to around here."

Old Sir Rudolph Talbot appeared to be quite dazed for the time, and it was very evident that he had not recognized his assailant.

His daughter bent down to assist him in regaining his feet, as she anxiously inquired:

"Are you injured, father? Who was the wretch who attacked you?"

The old man only glared around in a vacant manner, as he muttered to himself:

"I could not say who he is, but it seems like a dream to me that I met him long years ago."

Pat Malloy was assisting the old knight in regaining his feet, when Oscar Talbot hurled him aside, crying:

"How dare you touch my father, sirrah, after entering into this vile plot against us? Where is Dora, and who was that here with her awhile ago?"

A smile passed over Pat Malloy's face as he stared around and beheld Tom Bodkin and his fair cousin hastening down toward the roadside on the edge of the cliff, and he turned to the proud beauty of Talbot Castle as he remarked:

"Some young gentleman has taken your young friend under his protection, and she appears to be satisfied with the arrangement."

Eva Talbot looked in the same direction, and then she cast a scornful glance at the disguised youth, as she demanded:

"Who is the person who was here with you, sir, and who is now going down with my cousin?"

Pat Malloy was moving away after his friend, as he replied:

"My friend is a very worthy young man who lives not far from here, and who was formerly acquainted with Miss Dora Bodkin."

"It is that wretch Tom Bodkin," cried the old knight, "and he is running away with Dora Bodkin. Haste down for the dragoons, Oscar, and I will run after them."

The old knight had recovered his senses and his strength as well, and he darted along the cliff as he spoke.

Pat Malloy was hurrying along after him, when Eva Talbot caught him by the arm, saying:

"What is the meaning of this, sir? Are you assisting in the plot to abduct my cousin?"

Pat saw that the young lady's brother was hastening away also, leaving them alone on the cliff for a while, and he replied in merry tones:

"Is it a crime, young lady, to aid a friend in winning the lady of his love?"

"Then my cousin Dora is flying with young Bodkin?"

"They are not flying very fast at present, as your father appears to be overtaking them. Let us hasten on, Miss Talbot, and assist in keeping the peace."

The two young people did hasten on together, the proud beauty casting a side glance at the youth while she inquired:

"Have you found young Pat Malloy yet, sir?"

"I have not, young lady. Mr. Tom Bodkin is aiding me in looking for the lad, and—"

"You are aiding him in finding a wife," interrupted Eva Talbot with a droll smile.

The disguised youth laughed merrily ere he replied:

"One good turn deserves another, you know."

They were still walking on after the others when the young girl suddenly placed her hand on Pat's arm as she remarked:

"I think you have found the lad you are in search of, sir."

"Why do you think so, Miss Talbot?"

"Because I believe you are the person yourself."

The disguised youth started a little on being thus accused, and he then asked:

"And if I should be, would you betray me, young lady?"

"That would depend on what your motives were in disguising yourself as you do."

Before Pat Malloy could make a suitable reply angry voices ahead attracted their attention, and on looking along the cliff the youth could see that his friend Tom Bodkin was brought to bay in his love enterprise for the time at least.

When the handsome young farmer first saluted Dora as she was walking with her guardian the old man greeted him in furious tones, aiming a blow at him at the same time.

In the slight scuffle that ensued the young farmer lost his riding-cap, and it was then that Pat Malloy's father sprang out from behind the cliff to assail his old enemy.

Paying little attention to what was passing around him, and devoting his whole eloquence to the young lady he loved so well, the young farmer half coaxed and half forced her along the cliff with him.

While thus moving along he regained his cap again, as it had been swept some distance by the night breeze.

Dora Bodkin was a timid creature at best, but she was faithful to the man beside her, and she would have gladly fled with him were she not afraid of the anger of her all-powerful guardian.

The young girl did not fear his anger so much on her own account as she dreaded the consequences of that flight falling on her young lover.

Tom Bodkin sought to gain the wood where his horses were awaiting them, but the timid girl held back, so that her guardian was soon on them.

Then, seizing her by the arm, the old knight dragged her rudely away from the young farmer, crying:

"You miserable wretch! you cannot steal my ward in that fashion."

At that moment four dragoons sprang up the cliff from the road below, and two of them seized Tom Bodkin on the instant, while the old knight cried again:

"That is right, soldiers. I am Sir Rudolph Talbot, and that young rascal has assaulted me and tried to steal away this young lady here, whose guardian I am. He is a scoundrel and a rebel, and I order you to drag him away to prison."

Tom Bodkin struggled furiously in the hands of the dragoons, while Dora cried:

"Oh, Sir Rudolph, you are too severe on my cousin altogether, as I came with him of my own free will."

Tom Bodkin struggled fiercely with the dragoons, but the four of them succeeded in securing him just as Eva Talbot and the disguised Pat Malloy appeared on the scene.

Young Oscar Talbot hurried up after the soldiers soon after, and pointed to Pat Malloy, as he cried:

"Take that fellow up also, as I am certain that he is the leader of the moonlighters who just attacked my father up on the cliff."

Two of the dragoons made a dash at Pat Malloy, who sprang back, crying:

"Look out for yourselves, my fine fellows, as you will get into trouble if you touch me. I call on this young lady here to witness that I sprang to the rescue of her father when his own son held back."

"Arrest the rascal," cried young Oscar Talbot, "and I will prove that he is an outlaw."

Eva Talbot sprang before the dragoons on the instant, placing herself in front of the disguised youth as she addressed her brother, crying:

"Shame on you, Oscar. This gentleman did protect father against the outlaws, and I am certain that he is not connected with them in any way."

"Who and what is he, then?" demanded the old knight.

"He is an officer from Dublin, father, and he is in search of a youth who disappeared around here some months ago in a mysterious manner."

The old knight started on hearing the assertion, and advanced to his daughter, as he whispered into her ear:

"How do you know this, Evaline? Did you meet the person before?"

"I did, sir. That is the person who rode over the gate near the keeper's lodge."

The old knight paused a moment and cast a hurried glance at the disguised youth and then at his daughter, as he asked the latter in subdued tones:

"What is the name of the youth he was in search of?"

"Pat Malloy, I believe, sir."

"And has he found him?"

"I believe he has, sir."

"Where is he now, then?"

"I cannot tell you, sir; but the officer himself may do so."

Sir Rudolph then approached the disguised youth, and beckoned him to step aside with him, as if fearing that the others would overhear them, as he inquired:

"Are you an officer, sir?"

Pat Malloy had made up his mind as to how he should act, and he answered without the slightest hesitation:

"I am, sir."

"Did you find the youth you were in search of?"

"I did, sir."

"When and where?"

"I decline to answer that question."

"Where is the youth now?"

"He is at sea, I believe, and returning to America."

The old knight cast another very searching glance on the disguised youth before he inquired:

"Who employed you to search for him? Remember that I am a magistrate, that I have a right to ask you about any suspicious character caught prowling around here."

Pat Malloy smiled as he asked:

"Was young Pat Malloy a suspicious character, Sir Rudolph Talbot?"

"Certainly he was. I do not believe that he has escaped to America, and I am convinced that he is prowling around here now in company with the rascally moonlighters."

The pretended detective shrugged his shoulders, as he retorted:

"You are at liberty to think what you like about the lad, and I can only say that his friends employed me to search for him. They represented that he was an honest youth, a shipwrecked sailor, and perfectly peaceful in every way."

"Who are those friends?"

"His father and mother."

"Where do they reside?"

"In America, sir."

The old knight pondered for some moments and fixed his suspicious eyes on the disguised youth before he again demanded:

"How long since you found the youth, sir?"

"About two weeks ago."

"Then why do you linger around here now if you have succeeded in your object?"

Because I am taking a holiday, sir, and I am spending it with friends who live in the neighborhood."

"Who are those friends?"

"Mr. Tom Bodkin there is my nephew, and I am stopping at his house for the present."

"Then you confess that you aided him to-night when he tried to abduct Miss Dora Bodkin?"

"I don't confess anything of the kind, Sir Rudolph Talbot. We came out for a walk on the cliff on this beautiful moonlight night, and my nephew met the young lady and you by the merest chance. As you are a magistrate, you should know that you are committing an outrage by arresting my nephew for merely taking a walk with the young lady."

The old knight drew back a step or two and glared at the disguised youth in an angry manner as he cried aloud:

"You impudent puppy, I will show you that I have the power and the will to punish you both! I know that that young rascal is connected with the moonlighters around here, and I believe you are also. I will place you both under arrest for daring to conspire for the abduction of the young lady, who is my charge. Seize this fellow, soldiers, and drag them both off to jail."

Fearing that he would be again dragged to that gloomy old castle in which he had spent so many bitter months, Pat Malloy became quite desperate.

On receiving another order from the old magistrate, two of the dragoons moved to arrest the disguised youth again, when he sprang back, drawing his revolver, as he cried:

"I am a free man and I have committed no crime. If you attempt to arrest me without cause I will defend myself to the death!"

The two young ladies screamed with terror when they saw the dragoons advancing on the disguised youth with their swords, and Eva Talbot sprang to his defense again as she cried:

"For shame, father. I am certain that this gentleman has not committed any crime. On the other hand, he drove your assailants away to-night, and you should thank him and reward him instead of punishing him."

The dragoons appeared to coincide with the young lady, or they may have been affected by the revolver in the hands of

the accused man, as they halted again when opposed by the young lady, one of them saying:

"Perhaps the gentleman will come quietly with us?"

"Not I!" cried Pat Malloy. "I am innocent of any crime, and I will not be treated like a dog. Sir Rudolph Talbot, beware, as I will denounce you if you go too far with me. Pat Malloy may be in Ireland yet, and he can testify that you are not a lover of justice when you wish to serve your own private ends."

The old knight appeared to be terribly moved by the threat thus made, and he motioned the soldiers back, while he said to them in agitated tones:

"Draw off with your other prisoner, and I will deal with this fellow."

The soldiers were dragging Tom Bodkin away when his cousin Dora sprang forward and clasped his arms, crying:

"They must not take you to prison, Tom, as I declare that you did not attempt to steal me away. I came with you freely, and I will go with you now to prison if necessary. Oh, Eva, Eva, plead with your father for me, and do not let him send Tom to prison."

"He is a vile rebel, and he deserves to be hung," cried young Oscar Talbot, who was foaming with rage on perceiving beyond a doubt that Dora Bodkin was deeply attached to the dashing young farmer.

Deeming it the proper time for interfering in behalf of his young friend, and having noted the effect his former words had on the old knight, Pat Malloy approached the latter again, and addressed him in very low tones, saying:

"Sir Rudolph Talbot, I can place my hands on young Pat Malloy to-night, and I know why you were persecuting him. We have powerful friends around here, and you have deadly enemies. Let Tom Bodkin go free, or I will expose the man with the black crape, who confined an innocent youth for months in his castle without any just cause."

The knight trembled again as he stared at the bold lad, and then hissed forth:

"You are a fiend, whoever you are."

"Not at all, Sir Rudolph. I am a lover of justice, and, powerful as you are, I will see that justice is done to my friends if you persist in persecuting them."

CHAPTER IX.

PITTED AGAINST THE OLD TYRANT.

Captain Oscar Talbot had taken a deep dislike to Tom Bodkin and the pretended old stranger, and he was determined that they should both feel the vengeance of his family.

The young man had heretofore been assured that he could win Dora Bodkin for his wife, notwithstanding her apparent dislike of him, and fierce was his rage when he discovered that she was deeply attached to the worthy young farmer.

Young men like Oscar Talbot, living in Ireland, and witnessing the oppression and cruelties of those in power, considered that the strong hand used by those of his class could carry all before it, and that the farmers and poor people should have no rights whatever.

The old knight was of the same opinion, and as he was the most powerful man in the neighborhood, it was strange that he hesitated in arresting and crushing Tom Bodkin and the old stranger.

There was something about the mysterious old stranger, however, that caused the old tyrant to pause, while the words he had spoken set him all of a tremble.

Pat Malloy's disguise was so very clever that the old fellow

never once suspected him of being the youth who was imprisoned in the castle for so many long months.

Since the night of his escape Sir Rudolph had his agents on the watch for the youth, and his son was aware of the fact.

As they could not find Pat Malloy they concluded that he had either joined the moonlighters and was hiding on the mountain, or that he had hastened away from the country.

From what they had seen of the young fellow, however, they feared that he would not adopt the latter course, and that he would remain in Ireland to solve the mystery of his imprisonment.

Evaline Talbot was not aware of the imprisonment of the brave boy in the castle, or of the secret motives that prompted her father in persecuting him.

After the first meeting with the disguised youth the dark-eyed beauty became deeply interested in the gallant young stranger who had cleared the iron gate in such a splendid manner.

Each of the young ladies had seen the disguised youth riding about with Tom Bodkin, when they could not be perceived in turn, and they held many conversations regarding the young man.

On making some private inquiries, Eva Talbot learned that a young man named Pat Malloy had been cast ashore on the coast, and that he had disappeared some time after in a mysterious manner.

Yet she did not suspect that her father or brother could have anything to do with that disappearance.

It may be remembered that the young ladies were not residing in the castle during Pat Malloy's imprisonment there, and the old knight and his agents kept the matter so quiet that it was not known to any other members of the household.

On encountering the disguised youth on the cliff that night something whispered to the proud girl that he was no other than the missing youth, but she could not dream that he was a secret enemy of her family.

Indeed, while Pat Malloy was deeply incensed against those who had treated him in such a cruel manner, he felt backward in working against them on account of the bright-eyed young lady.

The youth had a very soft spot in his heart, and that spot was touched by the bright glances of Eva Talbot.

The mystery attached to his own case, as well as the appearance of his father on the scene, however, served to inspire the brave youth to see the matter out to the end, and death alone could prevent him from giving up the idea.

The actions and words of Eva Talbot on that night made Pat Malloy feel still more kindly toward her, and he pledged himself mentally that he would not cause her pain if possible.

The disguised youth would have liked to get away that night without betraying himself, as he felt that the struggle would be an unequal one if Sir Rudolph Talbot and his son recognized him.

Pat Malloy also thought a good deal about his father, and while he could not bear him any great love, he did not wish to see a half-crazy man come to a violent death or to degradation of any kind.

It was a fearful muddle all around for the disguised youth, but he rather enjoyed it, as he said to himself while the old knight turned aside to consult with his son:

"Eva Talbot knows me, but the others do not. But if she promises to keep my secret I am all right for the present. If I am compelled to throw off my disguise I will have to take to the hills with the moonlighters and fight the old tyrant as best I may. If I could only see father once more he may give me some information that would guide me. In any case, I am bound to see the thing out, whatever happens."

While thus ruminating Pat Malloy felt a light hand on his arm, and then Eva Talbot whispered to him, saying:

"I heard you threatening my father awhile ago, and I would like to know the meaning of it."

"The meaning is simple enough, Miss Talbot. Your father threatened me with imprisonment, and I told him that I had friends who would be glad to see that I had justice done me, against him."

The young girl smiled archly as she asked:

"Are you not really the Pat Malloy in whom he seems to be so deeply interested?"

"I am, young lady, and I beg that you will not betray me for the present, as I have enemies around here who sought my destruction."

"Is my father one of those enemies?"

"To be candid with you, I have reason to believe that he is, and that he wishes me out of the country forever for some secret reason."

Eva Talbot appeared to be quite astonished at the information thus received, but she soon responded, saying:

"You may be certain that I will not betray you if I were assured that my father or his agents are treating you unjustly, sir."

Pat Malloy did not wish to give his experiences in the woods and in the old castle of Talbot, and he simply answered:

"I can only swear to you that I have been very unjustly treated by two of your father's followers, and I feel pretty certain that either he or your brother instructed them in treating me as they did. They are approaching us now, and you can denounce me as Pat Malloy, the shipwrecked sailor, if you like."

The young lady shook her head in the most positive manner, as she replied, in very low tones:

"I will keep my lips sealed for the present, and until we meet again."

Then raising her voice she addressed her father, saying:

"Well, father, I trust you have decided not to molest those persons for the present."

"I have so decided, Eva; but I will take good care that neither of them meet you or my ward here again. A few more words with you, sir."

The last words were addressed to Pat Malloy, who then perceived that the dragoons had released his friend, the young farmer.

Drawing the disguised youth aside the old knight spoke to him in earnest tones, saying:

"Is it true that young Pat Malloy is in this neighborhood, sir?"

"It is true, Sir Rudolph."

"Are you really his friend?"

"I am his true friend."

"Then I advise you to send him out of the country as soon as possible, as he is not wanted here. If he attempts to pit himself against us he will soon find that all his friends cannot save him."

A defiant glare appeared in the young fellow's eyes as he retorted, saying:

"I am certain that young Pat Malloy will never leave Ireland until he finds out why he was assailed and imprisoned in a certain castle, where a man wearing a black mask strove in vain to make him confess that his real name was not Pat Malloy."

"Do you know his real name?" demanded the old knight in fierce tones.

"I do not, sir; but I will know it, I trust, as I will soon meet one who can unravel that mystery."

The old knight stared at the speaker in the most suspicious manner as he demanded:

"Who is that person?"

Pat Malloy was on the point of declaring that it was his own father, but he remembered that it would not be well to betray the old man, desperate as he was, until he had his permission, and he replied:

"I am not at liberty to say who that person is now, sir, but you may rest assured that you will soon hear from him through young Pat Malloy."

The old knight stamped his foot in rage and then turned away, saying:

"Tell the young fool for me that he will rue the day and the hour when he pits himself against me. If you are his friend watch yourself well while in this neighborhood, for I am not accustomed to tolerate any interlopers in my affairs."

The disguised youth laughed in a provoking manner as he retorted:

"I will not defy you myself, Sir Rudolph, but I tell you plainly that young Pat Malloy will pit himself against you very soon, great and powerful as you are. As for myself, I fear you not, and I will remain here just as long as I please."

The disguised youth then turned away to join Tom Bodkin, who was sorely disappointed in seeing Dora retreating with the others and the four dragoons as an escort.

"Hang my eyes," groaned the young farmer, "if I had half a dozen good fellows here with me I would take the darling away by main force."

"There is a good time coming, Tom," replied Pat Malloy, "and I bet you my life we will find another chance to meet the two darlings alone, when we may make a double match of it."

The young farmer was compelled to smile at the impudence of a poor youth like Pat Malloy running away with the proud lady of Talbot, and he said:

"I have always heard that you Americans have the cheek of the mischief, but it is too much to think of you ever running away with the proudest and the richest young lady in the whole county."

"Stranger things than that may happen soon, my good fellow, as I feel that it was good fortune drove me on the coast of Ireland on that fearful night. Where do you think I can find my father to-night?"

They were standing at the edge of the cliff at the moment, watching the soldiers and the others retreating toward the old castle, when a harsh voice was heard behind them, crying:

"You can see me now, Pat Malloy, and talk to me at the same time."

Then up from a steep path sprang old Malloy, his face covered with the gray beard.

Young Pat was so much taken by surprise that he did not have time to remove his own disguise, but he soon found that it would not have availed him anything, as his father had already recognized him.

Staring at each of the young men with a wild glare, old Malloy addressed his son again, saying:

"And so it was you all the time?"

"Yes, father, and this is a friend with whom I have been staying."

The old man cast another glance at young Bodkin ere he responded, saying:

"Oh, I know young Bodkin well, and his father before him, and I can tell the pair of you that the soldiers would never have taken you to prison to-night. Did Sir Rudolph Talbot know you, Pat?"

"I think not, sir."

"Did any of the others?"

"I fear that one of the young ladies recognized me."

"Which of them?"

"Miss Eva Talbot."

* A fierce imprecation burst from the old man before he cried:

"That's bad, very bad. Why were you such a fool as to let one of the race know you?"

"I couldn't help it, sir."

"Then you must change your disguise or leave the country forever. Which will you do, you stubborn boy?"

The old man spoke in very abrupt tones, and young Pat could see that he was anxious for him to leave Ireland at once, yet he replied:

"I will remain here for the present, sir."

"Then meet me at the same spot in the wood of Talbot to-morrow night and bring this young man with you."

He then turned abruptly to Tom Bodkin and asked:

"Are you willing to risk a little in order to take the young lady you love from the clutches of the Talbots, Tom Bodkin?"

"I am willing to risk my life to win her," promptly answered the young farmer.

"Then come to the wood with my son to-morrow night when the moon is rising, and maybe we'll balk the Talbots in a scheme they have on foot now."

And without saying another word the half crazy man turned and disappeared down the steep path.

When he had disappeared, young Pat Malloy turned to his friend and asked:

"Will you come with me, Tom?"

"To be sure I will. I would go through fire and water to win Dora, and I think that is what your father meant when he spoke of balking the Talbots."

And I think so, too, but I wish he would stop and give us some more information. However, we will see him to-morrow night, and then I may be able to draw him out better."

CHAPTER X.

IN THE DARK WOODS AGAIN.

On riding home after the stirring scene on the cliff, Pat Malloy and his young friend held an important consultation, when it was decided that the young Irish-American should assume another disguise at once.

When the two young men reached the farmer's house they found young Shamus O'Connor awaiting them there, and one glance at his honest face served to tell them that something unusual had happened to him.

After exchanging the usual salutation, Tom Bodkin addressed his friend, asking what was wrong.

"Everything," the young fellow answered. "This morning we got notice that we must give up the farm, as the Talbots won't give us a new lease; and last evening my sister Julia left the house, and since then we haven't been able to find a trace of her, though we have tramped around all day. Oh, if we could only find the rascals who took her off, as I am certain that she met with foul play."

Pat Malloy remembered the great kindness bestowed on him by the O'Connors, and he, as well as Bodkin, immediately volunteered to go with him in search of his sister, and all three mounted fresh horses for that purpose.

Pat Malloy still retained the same disguise, as he had no time to change it, although his young friend had prepared for such an emergency.

When the three young men were riding along the road, Pat Malloy remembered some incidents at the home of the O'Connors on the last evening that he spent there, as he had noted at the time that young Oscar Talbot was particularly attentive to Julia.

Turning to Shamus O'Connor, the young Irish-American inquired:

"Did you see Captain Oscar Talbot lately?"

"Tare an' ages, why didn't I think of that before? I now mind seeing two rascals stopping at the house last week, and they said that they were followers of the Talbots. The day after Captain Oscar called, and I now remember that there was no one at home but Julia. Oh, the villain of the world! If I only thought that he would harm a hair of her head he would be a dead man to-morrow, and no mistake."

"Take it easy on that point, Shamus," said Tom Bodkin, who was thinking of his cousin Dora and young Talbot's attention to her. "It isn't likely that Oscar Talbot would dare to do anything wrong when he is making fierce love to Miss Dora Bodkin."

Before any of the others could make a rejoinder a party of horsemen approached them, and a signal was sent forth by Tom Bodkin.

The signal was answered on the instant by the advancing parties, who turned out to be friends out in search of the missing girl.

When the two parties came together on the road it was proposed that they should all proceed together in the direction of the Talbot woods, from whence they could reconnoiter around the castle.

As each of the party had arms of some kind, they did not fear the consequences of a meeting with the followers of the Talbots, while some of them were more than anxious for such an encounter.

On approaching the gate over which he had leaped the good horse, Pat Malloy perceived a light in the little cottage in the wood, and he proposed to Tom Bodkin that they take a peep at the occupants of the cottage, while the rest of the band ride on for some distance at full speed, so as not to create any suspicion by lingering on the spot.

Bodkin immediately caught at the suggestion and selecting another young fellow to accompany them, and who was to lie in wait within shouting distance should the two young friends require aid in their venture, proceeded to carry it out.

Leaving their friend at his post, Pat Malloy and the young farmer stole silently along toward the cottage, and they were soon able to peer in at the little window.

Seated at the table inside, and enjoying themselves with pipes and liquor, were two rough-looking fellows who were dressed as gamekeepers.

One glance at the rascals told Pat Malloy that they were the men who had assaulted him on that eventful night when the coach upset.

The two men were talking in loud tones, as if perfectly assured that no prowling enemies could approach the cottage to overhear them, and the two young men watching them soon learned enough to warrant them acting against the gamekeepers without delay by calling on their other friends.

They silently retreated to where their comrade was waiting for them.

Covering their faces with black crape, they stole silently along so as to intercept the two worthies while making their rounds.

The gamekeepers were armed with shotguns, which they were in the habit of using on prowling poachers who infested the woods at certain times, and they were also stout fellows who could use the weapons as clubs.

After peering out at the gate and into the paths around, the two men returned to the cottage again, put out the light, and made their way toward the old castle.

They had not proceeded along the path for a great distance, however, when they were suddenly assailed by three men with black crape on their faces, and they were felled to the ground and their hands bound before they could offer the slightest resistance.

The two prisoners were then marched along through the

wood, and they soon found themselves surrounded by a dozen masked men who were armed in various ways.

The gamekeepers were brave fellows enough, but they did tremble when they found themselves in the hands of the moonlighters.

While some of the moonlighters still kept careful watch to guard against surprise, Tom Bodkin addressed them in husky tones, saying:

"If you offer to cry out or speak too loud we will have to silence you. If you don't answer the questions put to you fairly you are dead men also. Now, where is Julia O'Connor?"

The two men started, and one of them said:

"Make a clean breast of it, Jack, or we are goners."

CHAPTER XI.

A STRANGE ADVENTURE.

The two rascals did make a clean breast of it.

They confessed that they had abducted Julia O'Connor on the previous evening while on her way to the town, and that they had borne her to the old castle, where she was then confined in one of the deserted wings.

They stated that the act was done under the instigation of Captain Oscar Talbot; but they believed that his father did not know anything about the affair.

Young Shamus O'Connor was in a fearful rage on hearing the confession of the two men, and he was for at once proceeding to the castle, and demanding the release of his sister, or of taking her by force.

When the two gamekeepers informed him that Julia was perfectly safe, and that Oscar Talbot had not seen her since the abduction, Shamus became a little calmer and inquired of the rascals:

"How does it come that he has not seen her yet, the mischief take you?"

"Because he has been busy all day with the young ladies at the castle, and we didn't bring the girl here until a little before daylight this morning."

Having assured Shamus that they would soon rescue his sister, Tom Bodkin addressed the gamekeepers again, saying:

"Now, what is this game you are up to for to-morrow night that we have got wind of?"

"What game do you mean, sir?"

"I mean about forcing another young lady to marry a certain young gentleman."

The two rascals exchanged significant glances again, and Jack answered:

"Blow my eyes, sir, if you ain't a knowing cove. Yes, there is a game on foot of that kind."

He then went on to inform the young farmer that Oscar had formed a plan by which Dora Bodkin was to be forced into a marriage.

Having gained all the information possible on the subject mentioned, and at a hint from Pat Malloy, Tom Bodkin said:

"On a certain night, several months ago, you waylaid a young lad in the cabin over there. Now, we want to know who put you up to that game?"

"We were acting for our masters," said Jack.

"What was the object in making the young lad a prisoner in the castle?"

"We supposed that the young cove was to be kept locked up for some purpose that we couldn't fathom, and we didn't trouble our heads about it."

"Did you know that he has escaped?"

"Certainly, sir. We have been looking out for him ever since

the night he got down on the rope, and we are offered a hundred pounds apiece if we nab him again on the quiet."

"Did the Talbots suspect who assisted the young lad in escaping?"

"Not they, sir. There was an awful rumpus about it in the castle, but it was soon kept dark on account of the young ladies."

"Then the young ladies did not know anything about the prisoner?"

"Not that we knows of. It was the old master and the young one who wanted to get him into their clutches again on the sly."

Having gained all the information possible from the two worthies they were placed under strong guard, and Pat Malloy and his two friends most interested in the affair stepped aside to consult.

It was then resolved to use the two gamekeepers in order to make a secret attack on the castle that night.

When the two rascals were consulted on the subject, and under threats of instant death, they volunteered to guide the party to the deserted wing of the castle by a path leading up from the bay.

In order to reach that path Pat Malloy and his friends had to skirt the woods and come out on the cliff not far from the spot where they had encountered the Talbots that night.

The moon was shining brightly, but the brave fellows hoped to gain the castle by the wooded path spoken of without being perceived by its inmates.

When the party reached the cliff overlooking the bay and the broad ocean beyond, Pat observed a female form striding along a cliff above them.

Calling Tom Bodkin's attention to the figure, the disguised youth remarked:

"Isn't it a strange time for a young girl to be out on the lonely cliff?"

The words startled Tom Bodkin, and he sprang from his horse as he exclaimed:

"Mercy on me, if I don't believe it is my cousin Dora, and she moves like one distracted. Dismount and come with me, my boy, and we will leave the horses up here with our friends, as we might frighten her into springing into the sea by the clatter of their hoofs."

The two young men were soon dashing down the cliff path, and as they drew nearer to the female form Tom Bodkin clasped the arm of his friend as he gasped forth:

"Heavens alive, it is Dora, and no mistake! The villains at the castle must have driven her mad. Steal along silently and keep close inside, so as to keep her from going over the rocks if she turns that way."

The two friends did steal along silently, holding their breaths the while, as if fearing to alarm the fair girl by speaking aloud.

But, silent as their movements were, their footsteps must have startled the young girl, as they were scarcely a hundred yards from her when she gave a startled scream, gazed wildly around her for a few moments, and then walked over the rocks and into the water beneath.

Wild was the cry of anguish that burst from the young farmer.

Pat Malloy darted toward the spot where the fair girl had gone over as he cried:

"Have courage, man, and we will save her."

Casting one glance below only the brave youth saw a dark form struggling in the water, and without the slightest hesitation he sprang in to the rescue as he cried aloud:

"I'll save her yet, Tom."

Like one distracted the young farmer rushed to the edge of the rocks also, and without even pausing to look down,

he sprang in after his friend as he exclaimed in thrilling tones:

"I'll save her—the darling—or I'll die with her."

CHAPTER XII.

PAT MALLOY'S REWARD.

When the two young men started down from the cliff in the hope of intercepting the young girl before she would fall into the sea, they had presence of mind enough to remove the black crape from their faces so as not to cause her fresh alarm thereby.

Pat Malloy had made a splendid leap forward on springing into the water, and he sank beneath the waves only a few feet away from where the young girl was struggling.

He was soon on the surface again, and clasping one arm around her waist he struck out for a cove close at hand, telling Tom Bodkin to follow him.

He reached the little cove and laid the fainting girl on the soft sand and stared down at the pale face, when he suddenly started back, crying:

The mischief take me, Tom, if it is Miss Dora at all; it is Miss Eva Talbot, as I live."

Eva Talbot opened her eyes at the moment, and inquired: "Where am I and what has happened?"

"I fear that you were wandering in your sleep, and—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Eva. "That is an unfortunate habit I have when I go to sleep agitated. But tell me where I am now, please?"

"You are in a cove under the cliff."

A shudder passed over the frame of the young girl, and she felt her wet garments as she inquired:

"Did I walk over the cliff?"

"I fear that you did; but you see that you are safe now, and I hope you are not injured in any way."

"I do not think that I am injured at all. How can I thank you for rescuing me?"

"Tom Bodkin helped me, you know."

"Don't believe a word of it, Miss Talbot. I didn't give you any help at all, as he sprang over after you before I could think of it."

"Let us hasten and get up on the cliff again before the young lady catches cold," said Pat. "Lead the way, my boy, as you must know the path, and I will escort Miss Eva up after you."

Tom Bodkin started slowly up, while the others followed him.

Pat Malloy perceived that the young lady was still trembling, and he offered her his hand on the narrow and rocky path, saying:

"Allow me to guide you, young lady, as I fear you have not fully recovered from the shock yet."

Eva clasped the hand thus extended to her, and pressed it warmly as she responded:

"How can I thank you for your brave act?"

"Don't mention it at all, Miss Eva; I would be willing to risk my life a hundred times over again to save you."

As the young man uttered the words he paused in the path, and then turned, still clasping her hand, as he demanded:

"Don't you believe me, Miss Eva?"

"I do believe you, and there is all the reward I can ever give you."

As the dark-eyed beauty spoke the words she raised her head and imprinted a kiss on Pat Malloy's lips.

The happy youth had barely time to respond in a similar manner when Tom Bodkin turned on the path, crying:

"Here we are at the top of the cliff, and our friends are still above waiting for us."

Still holding the hand of the young girl within his own, Pat Malloy reached the top of the cliff with her as he said to himself:

"The mischief take me if I wouldn't like to jump in below there every night in the week for such a reward as that—and she is not as stuck up as I first took her to be by any means."

After consulting a few moments it was decided that Tom Bodkin should hasten up to where his friends were waiting, and return with a horse, as the young girl said:

"I can ride back to the castle without attracting any attention, and I do not care to stop at any of the houses near here."

The young men had flung off their capes before springing in to the rescue, and they secured them again.

On receiving a hint from Tom Bodkin, Pat Malloy told Eva Talbot of the abduction of Julia O'Connor by the gamekeepers, and she was fearfully indignant, saying:

"I knew that my brother was a wretch, and that Dora Bodkin had a good right to despise him, but I never dreamed that he would go as far as that. I will insist on her release at once, and my wicked brother must make amends to the O'Connors."

The young fellow was then about to speak of the intended abduction of Dora Bodkin on the following night, when a dark form sprang upon the cliff, and Pat Malloy's father appeared before them, crying:

"Did I not warn you, young fellow, not to have anything to do with the Talbots. You will soon make me mad enough to fling you over the cliff."

Begging the startled girl to retreat a few steps behind him, Pat Malloy advanced boldly toward his father as he said to him in low, but fearless tones:

"I want you to know, sir, that I am my own master, and that you must not interfere with me."

The old man's brow darkened in a fearful manner, and he clenched his hands as he retorted:

"You are your own master, are you?"

"Yes, I am, sir, and while I respect you as my father, I must say that I think you are acting in a very strange manner. One thing I will have you know, and that is that you must not injure or insult this young lady in any manner."

"Who spoke of injuring and insulting her?"

"You speak as if you were her enemy, sir."

"I am her father's enemy, and I don't deny it; but I wouldn't hurt her, for she isn't to blame for his acts in the days gone by."

"Then why do you blame me for speaking to the young lady after I was fortunate enough to do her a kindness?"

The wild glare in the old man's eyes became wilder still, and he shook his hands in the most violent manner, as he replied:

"Because I want you to clear out from here and not to have anything to do with her or her race."

Eva Talbot heard every word that was uttered, and she advanced boldly at the moment and faced the old man, as she demanded:

"Is my father this young man's enemy?"

"He is, and of the deadliest kind," promptly answered the old man.

"Why is he his enemy?"

"Go and ask him yourself, young lady, and ask him why he kept him a prisoner in the old castle for so many long months. Ha, ha, ha! 'Tis little the old villain thought that I would come all the way from America to help to rescue my boy. Take my advice, once for all, Pat Malloy, and away with you from here, or you will curse the hour you didn't mind me."

Without waiting for a reply the old man turned suddenly and darted down the path.

Tom Bodkin was hastening toward them with a horse at the moment, when a warning cry from the cliff above announced the approach of strangers, and on turning their eyes in the direction of the castle they could perceive a strong party coming toward them.

"It is my father and his followers," said Eva. "Hasten away now, please, as I cannot bear any more excitement to-night, and rest assured that Julia O'Connor will be released at once and sent back to her home in safety."

"Please warn Dora that there is a plot against her also," whispered Tom Bodkin.

"I will—I will. Fear not but that we will meet again, and all will be well, my good friends."

The young girl then hastened away on foot to meet her friends, and the two young men turned to join their own party on the cliff.

It was decided to postpone the attack on the castle that night, and also to watch the main road leading from there, as Pat Malloy felt assured that Eva Talbot would keep her promise—as she did, as Julia O'Connor soon appeared in charge of two of the male followers of the castle, and she was escorted to her home by her brother and his friends.

The two rascally gamekeepers were taken in charge by the moonlighters, and placed in close confinement for the time, although they protested that they were willing to act in the interest of Pat Malloy and his friends.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WAYS OF A NOBLE GIRL.

Eva Talbot was given to walking in her sleep only when very much excited on retiring, and she was seriously agitated that night.

The first meeting on the cliff, the assault on her father, the attempted abduction of Dora by her young farmer lover, served to arouse the warm blood of the spirited girl, but there was something else as well, and that something else was Pat Malloy.

From the first day of meeting with the young stranger, she became deeply interested in him, and she kept thinking about him until he absorbed nearly all her thoughts.

The young girl felt that there was some mystery connected with the youth, she had reason to know that her father and brother were opposed to him, and she could not help feeling that her own life and fate would be mixed up with his in some way.

Although spirited and outspoken enough on most occasions, Eva Talbot hesitated in speaking to her father or brother on the subject, and she was even reticent with her confidential friend Dora Bodkin.

After witnessing the wordy encounter between her father and the disguised youth in presence of the dragoons, and when Pat Malloy defied the tyrant of the neighborhood, the young girl made up her mind to play an active part in the game that was then going on, and she resolved to speak to her father on the subject on the following day.

Being thus agitated on retiring to rest, Eva Talbot was scarcely asleep when she arose and put on her clothes, and then hastened away toward the scene where the last exciting meeting had occurred with Pat Malloy.

As the young girl was well acquainted with all the paths and passages leading from the castle, she was able to take her departure in that sound slumber without attracting much attention.

Dora Bodkin was the first to miss her young friend, as she was also restless and troubled during the night.

When the alarm was given, one of the male servants mentioned that he had seen the young lady leaving the castle, and then walking in the direction of the cliff; and then Sir Rudolph started in that direction with several of his armed retainers.

On meeting his daughter in her wet clothes, the old knight was very much alarmed, but she hastened to inform him that she had received no injury whatever.

On reaching the castle the good girl at once summoned her brother and said to him:

"Oscar, I will not upbraid you now, but I wish to tell you that if you have any hope of winning Dora Bodkin as your bride, you will at once release the innocent young girl who is your prisoner at present."

The young wretch attempted to bluster out of the charge by declaring that he knew nothing of the girl, but his good sister at once interrupted him, saying:

"If Julia O'Connor is not released and sent home within five minutes I will appeal to my father and to Dora as well."

The young reprobate saw that his sister was in deadly earnest, and he promised to comply with her request, begging of her at the same time to keep the affair a secret from his father and Dora.

"Shame on you," said the noble girl. "Is it any wonder that we have rebels and moonlighters in the country when those who should protect and encourage the people only treat them with outrage and cruelty. If I were a man, and a brother of that girl, I would shoot you down as I would a dog."

The young fellow tried a little more bluster, but his just sister dismissed him, saying:

"Go and release the young girl now, and send her safe to her home, or I will denounce you to my father before Dora."

The young man retreated from the room muttering to himself:

"Hang those gamekeepers, as they must have betrayed me. What can have become of them I would like to know, as they were to have met me tonight. I must release the girl or I will lose Dora."

Oscar Talbot did release the young girl, as we have seen, and he then started out in search of the two gamekeepers.

Great was the young man's perplexity on the following morning when no trace of the missing gamekeepers could be found, and he then began to realize that they had been either frightened away or made prisoners by Julia O'Connor's friends.

Sir Rudolph Talbot was not aware that his son had abducted the daughter of his old tenant, or that the two gamekeepers had been seized on the previous night.

The old knight had trouble enough of his own without troubling his head much about the doings of his rascally son as he was fearfully annoyed at the threats made to him by the old stranger who was representing Pat Malloy.

And yet he did not suspect that that old stranger was the brave lad himself, and he was not aware that the boy's father was in Ireland to aid him.

Sir Rudolph had reason to fear and hate old Malloy above all the men in the world, and yet that old enemy would be utterly powerless to injure him in worldly affairs if the young fellow could be put out of the way forever.

Eva Talbot slept soundly after her novel bath, and it was late on the following day before she appeared from her bedroom.

As her father was absent from the castle at the time, she could not speak to him on the subject uppermost in her mind, but she did find an opportunity of warning her brother that she was prepared to baffle any unlawful attempt on his part for securing Dora Bodkin as his wife.

The noble girl wrote a short note during the afternoon, which she dispatched by her faithful maid, and it was addressed to Mr. Richard Bodkin, who was then stopping at his nephew's farmhouse.

It was quite late in the evening when old Sir Rudolph did return to the castle, and Eva noticed that he was accompanied by some twenty desperate-looking men, all of whom were armed with improved rifles.

The young girl also noticed that one of the men was a noted detective in the employ of the government, and who had often served her father in his cruel work against the dissatisfied patriots in the neighborhood.

Seeking the first opportunity for a private interview, the brave young girl addressed the stern old knight, saying:

"Father, I wish to speak to you on an important matter, if you please."

Sir Rudolph did not encourage any interference in his affairs by any members of his family, and he somewhat rudely replied:

"What is it now, girl?"

"I wish to speak to you about the young man known as Pat Malloy, sir."

The old knight bent a fierce glare on the young girl as he demanded:

"What do you know about the young rascal?"

"Very little, sir. But I would like to know why he has been persecuted by your followers?"

"Who told you that he has been persecuted by my followers?"

"The gentleman you met on the cliff last night, and who is known as Richard Bodkin."

A muttered imprecation burst from the knight, and he bent a suspicious glance on his daughter as he again demanded:

"When and where did you meet that old cheat, girl, I would like to know?"

"He rescued me from the sea last night, sir, and he then informed me that young Pat Malloy was confined in this castle for several months by your orders, and that you were still seeking to crush the young man."

The old knight was always a little afraid of his noble-minded daughter, and he now saw that she was very much interested in the young stranger.

Not caring to defy her openly on the subject, and possessing a good deal of cunning, the old knight smiled as he asked:

"And why do you take so much interest in a young rebel, Eva?"

"Because I am anxious to know why you should persecute him, sir."

"I did not persecute him. I simply had him arrested because I had proof that he came here as an agent of those Irish rebels in America, who are using every means for destroying the landlords of Ireland."

"Then why was he not arrested by the police, sir, and put in jail in the usual manner?"

A cunning smile passed over the old man's face as he retorted:

"Because I saw fit to treat him as I pleased. The young rascal is not an ordinary rebel, and I had reason to know that I could prevail on him to turn informer, and then expose the secrets of the rascals who are giving us so much trouble around here at present."

The young girl smiled in a sarcastic manner as she replied:

"And did you succeed, father?"

Another dark frown passed over the old man's face, and he ground his teeth with rage as he answered:

"I did not, because some wretched traitor in the castle aided him in escaping."

The young girl did not speak again for some moments, and her father was about to dismiss her, when she interrupted him, saying:

"It seems very strange to me, father, that you should have treated the young man as you did. To be candid with you, the old gentleman I mentioned asserts that you have some private reasons for persecuting the young man."

Darker and darker grew the frown on the old knight's face, and he scowled fiercely at his brilliant young daughter as he demanded:

"And what if I have? Do you presume to interfere with my private affairs. Have you the impudence to champion this young rebel as against your own father, I would like to know? You speak of candor, girl. Be candid with me now and tell me what you are aiming at."

Eva saw that her father was in a fearful rage, but she was not frightened by his dark looks, and she answered in calm and respectful tones:

"Father, I only desire to know the truth. I was informed that you had a private reason for hating the young man, and I could not believe it. I am sorry to hear from your own lips that it is the truth, and I beg of you that you will tell me the cause of your enmity."

Fiercer still was the frown on the old man's face, and he pointed to the door as he cried in savage tones:

"Leave me, girl, and let me warn you not to interfere in my private concerns. I will also warn you that it is a death struggle between this young cur and myself, and if he succeeds the house of Talbot will fall to the ground. By all that's good or wicked, he will not succeed. No more on the subject at present, as I have important matters to settle tonight."

Being thus dismissed the troubled girl retreated to her own room, muttering:

"Hasty as father is, I never saw him in such a terrible rage before."

After pondering for some moments on the ominous words uttered by her father, Eva Talbot said to herself:

"Who and what can this young man be, and why does father hate him so? Whatever he may be, however, I will keep my appointment with him tonight."

Eva Talbot had scarcely left the library after the exciting interview with her father, when the old knight summoned the great government detective, whose name was Joseph Baldwin.

The conversation that ensued between the two men soon turned on young Pat Malloy, and the old knight told of his meeting with the pretended old officer and of his daughter's interference in behalf of the young man.

A grim smile appeared on the detective's face as he listened to the recital, and when the old knight concluded, he quietly remarked:

"And do you not suspect, Sir Rudolph, who that old gentleman really is?"

"Why, he is young Bodkin's uncle, of course."

Baldwin smiled again and rubbed his hands gleefully, as he remarked:

"He must be a clever one."

"Who must be a clever one?"

"Why, this young Pat Malloy, of course, sir."

"What are you driving at, Baldwin?"

"Simply this, sir. Young Pat Malloy and old Richard Bodkin are one and the same person."

The old knight sprang from his chair with an amazed expression, and then struck the table with his clenched fist as he exclaimed:

"By all that's wicked, but you are right, Baldwin. What a fool I was not to detect the young rascal before! Can it be possible that my daughter is in the secret all the time?"

"Shouldn't wonder a bit, sir."

The old knight strode to and fro, stamping his feet with rage ere he turned to the detective again and demanded:

"What is to be done, Baldwin? You are a clever fellow, and you can keep a secret."

The detective reflected some moments, as if weighing the whole subject over in his mind, before he inquired:

"As I understand it, Sir Rudolph, your main object at present is to seize this young fellow as quietly as possible?"

"Yes, yes; that is my main object."

"Then I would advise you to watch Miss Eva."

"Watch Miss Eva! What do you mean by such a suggestion, Baldwin?"

"You will pardon me, sir, but I have reason to think that your worthy daughter will soon seek an interview with Pat Malloy, and it is more than probable that they will meet in secret."

"The mischief you say!"

"Pray, do not be excited, Sir Rudolph, and you will soon see that I am right."

"It is perhaps just as well as it is, sir. The young lady has become interested in the young fellow from discovering him in disguise and from hearing that he has been persecuted by you. Let us seize him quietly, even in her presence, and you can then convince her that he has been arrested and removed by the legal authorities, and for the good of the state."

The old knight was delighted with the proposition.

About half an hour after Eva Talbot stole out of the castle enveloped in a cloak belonging to her maid, and she made her way toward the little cottage near the gate as she muttered to herself:

"It is but just that I should meet him and warn him, even though I may never see him again."

The young girl stole on by the most secluded paths, gazing back every now and again as if inspired by some secret feeling which told her that spies were on her track.

And spies were on the track of the brave girl at the moment, as Baldwin and some of his fellows were sneaking along after her, while her father was following in the background.

At the same moment Pat Malloy was waiting alone near the little cottage.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MEETING IN THE WOOD.

Eva Talbot did not like the part she was playing in stealing from her father's castle to seek an interview with the young stranger, who was acting in a very suspicious manner, to say the least.

If Eva Talbot had her own way that night she would have walked boldly from her father's castle or invited Pat Malloy to pay her a visit, but she felt that the young man's safety was at stake, if not his life, and she was therefore determined to use all precaution.

"I am certain that detective was watching me as I left the castle, but will he have the audacity to follow me unless so ordered by my father? I must be on my guard for the sake of the poor young man."

At that moment the young girl caught a glimpse of a crouching form in the bushes behind her, and she paused in the path not far from the cottage as she muttered to herself:

"The wretch is following me. What am I to do, as I fear that it is Pat Malloy they are after, and it would be dreadful if I were the cause of injury to him."

"I will lead the spying wretch a chase for it, and we will

see if I do not baffle him. Would that I could warn the young man without betraying myself."

Eva was very active and strong of limb, and she pushed on at full speed, laughing to herself as she muttered:

"Pat Malloy will be clever enough to avoid them, and I only hope that he saw me coming."

Pat Malloy did see the young girl tripping down the path leading to the gate.

"She fears that she is followed, and she is watching carefully. What a sweet, dear creature she is, and wouldn't I give my life to serve her."

When the youth saw Eva darting into the side path he felt for his revolver, as he said to himself:

"She sees some one after her, and she is trying to lead them astray. Can it be that the servant girl has betrayed her to her father?"

When Pat Malloy saw Baldwin and five or six of his fellows sneaking into the side path after the young girl, he was at a loss how to act at the moment.

He then resolved to act as a spy on the spies by following after them for the time.

The detective was the first to enter the path, and when he saw that the young girl was flying away from him at full speed, he stopped suddenly as he said to himself:

"She has taken the alarm somehow, and she is not going to meet the young fellow now. As I see through her game, we will watch for them around here."

The detective then retraced his steps, and he soon met Sir Rudolph, to whom he said:

"The young lady must have noticed us, as she has darted away through the side path."

"But why don't you follow her?" asked the old knight.

"Because I feel certain that the person she came to meet is not far from here at present. If we keep quiet, sir, and hide here among the trees for some time we can pounce on them."

"Very good, Baldwin; but don't let the young rascal escape you on any account."

The young rascal in question was listening to the words thus uttered, as he was crouched behind a tree.

"You won't take me this night, Sir Rudolph, and I'll meet your daughter in spite of you."

Pat Malloy only waited to observe the detective placing his men, and then muttered:

"Yes, the servant girl must have betrayed us, and the old knight is after me again. Would to heaven that my father would speak out, and then I would know better how to act against the old tyrant who seems to hate me so much. Now to try and find Eva."

Eva Talbot kept on for some time, moving as swiftly and as silently as possible, while she kept listening the while for the sound of footsteps behind her. Not hearing any signs of pursuit behind her, she muttered to herself:

"I hope in goodness the young man saw me and took warning by my actions before they could discover him. Oh, mercy, who are you?"

The exclamation burst forth from the young girl as a tall, dark form appeared suddenly before her, but before the stranger could make any reply she had recognized him as Pat Malloy's father.

"What brought you here, young lady?"

"I came to meet your son."

"What! You came to meet my son at night in the dark woods of Talbot?"

"Yes, I did, sir. I came to warn him that his enemies are after him again, and also to bid him farewell forever, as I hope to be able to induce him to leave Ireland as soon as possible."

"Do you mean that, young lady?"

"Certainly I do, sir."

"Why do you take so much interest in the lad?"

"Because I believe he has been unjustly persecuted."

"Do you know who he really is?" asked the old man.

"I only know that his name is Pat Malloy, that you are his father, and that my father desires to get him out of his way forever."

"That is the truth, Miss Talbot. Did you speak to your father on the subject?"

"I did, sir."

"Did you inform him that you met me?"

"I did not, sir. I do not believe that my father knows anything about you at present, and I am certain that I will not betray you whoever you are."

"Not if you knew that I was your father's worst enemy?"

"I would not denounce you unless I knew that you intended to kill my father in a stealthy manner, as I know that he is able and brave enough to defend himself against an open foe."

"Yes, yes, your father is brave enough and bad enough; but it is not for me to run him down to his daughter. Where is my son at present?"

"I think he is down by the iron gate near the cottage. I did not meet him as I intended, as I saw that I was followed from the house. If you can warn him that his enemies are on the watch for him at present it would be well."

Before the old man could reply, a soft, clear voice near them responded, saying:

"I am warned, Miss Eva."

Then out before them stepped Pat Malloy in a very different disguise.

His father and the young girl started a little on seeing him, and a joyous expression escaped from the mouth of the former as she said:

"Dear me, I am glad that you did not meet those who followed me. I would not know you, I am sure, if it were not for your voice."

"Nor I," said the old man, as he stared at his son. "One would suppose you were a regular play actor."

Pat Malloy then addressed his father, saying:

"Won't you be good enough, father, to let me speak a few words to this young lady?"

"To be sure I will, and I'll keep watch for you, too, as I know that she is going to advise you for your good. If you hear a cry like an owl make off there toward the road, as it will be a warning from me that our enemies are coming on you."

"Good Miss Eva, I am ever so much obliged to you for meeting me tonight, but I am afraid you will get into trouble on my account."

"Do not be alarmed about me, as I am not afraid of any one when I know that I am acting for the best."

Still holding the young girl's hand clasped within his own, Pat Malloy said:

"How was it that you were followed tonight?"

"My father must suspect me, and he has a celebrated government detective at the castle now, whose name is Baldwin. I spoke to my father about you this evening, and I must now warn you that his dislike of you is as deep as ever. Your present disguise is perfect, indeed, but yet I would advise you to leave this neighborhood at once, as your father requests you."

"I would like to do as you say, Miss Eva, but I cannot give up the fight in that manner. I have sworn to myself to remain here until I hear from my mother, and here I will remain!"

"But why do you wish to struggle against my father?"

Pat Malloy then hastened to give a truthful account of his adventures from the time of his landing in Ireland, and he concluded by saying:

"You can now see, good Miss Eva, that I would be a regular coward if I cleared out before I heard from my mother."

"Will you leave here if your mother requests you to do so again?"

"I don't know that I would, young lady."

"Would you not obey your good mother?"

"I would do so on one condition only."

"What is that?"

"I must first learn the cause of your father's enmity, and then I will decide whether it is best for us all that I should remain here to struggle against him or return to America again."

"But won't your own father tell you the secret cause of that enmity?"

"He hesitates to do so. As you may perceive, my father is not in his right mind. I never could understand him in America, and he puzzles me now more than ever."

The young girl reflected for a few moments, and she then looked the young man full in the face, as she bluntly inquired:

"Do you think that he is really your father?"

Pat Malloy started on hearing the question, as it had often been suggested to himself, and more particularly since his imprisonment in the old castle, and during the last three or four days.

Regarding the young girl with one of his pleasant smiles Pat candidly replied:

"On my word, Miss Eva, I have often thought that he was not my father, as my mother was not suited for him at all, and he was always rough and harsh to me."

"Do you imagine that your mother will come here to Ireland after you?"

"I have thought of that also; but she referred to some solemn vow she had taken against returning to her native country until a certain event occurred, and she is not the one to break her vow, unless she believed that she could save my life."

"Can you imagine what that event may be?"

"The death of my father. It looks to me as if the return of my father to this country may change her mind, and I wrote to her about him."

"Have you any idea why your father hates my father so much?"

"I can only imagine that my father was a tenant on this estate when he was a young man, and that your father treated him in a cruel manner."

"There must be something more than that."

The signal agreed on was heard at the moment, and the young girl said:

"Away to the road at once, as I fear that father's people are coming now."

"Yes, and they have the dogs on your scent," said old Malloy, as he appeared suddenly before them. "They have found your horse up near the cottage, and they are coming this way now. Come away with me and you will see that I can hide you in the dark woods of Talbot."

The warm-hearted girl returned the salute as she eagerly responded:

"And I will never forget you, you may be certain. Fly now on your life!"

Pat Malloy hastened away after his father, and the young girl darted up toward the castle as she muttered to herself:

"The poor, dear fellow! I wonder if I will ever see him again. Now to baffle them by getting in without their seeing me. I can hear the dogs now, and I only hope that they will follow on my track."

Sir Rudolph Talbot had a pack of dogs which had some of the bloodhound in their breed, and they were trained to hunt down the poachers and outlaws who sometimes infested the dense woods around the castle.

Three of those dogs were now bounding through the wood on the scent of young Pat Malloy, as they had traced him after finding his horse near the cottage.

Pat and his father had not proceeded far, when they heard the baying of the dogs; the old man turned to his son, saying:

"I suppose your friends are nearby."

"They are, sir."

"Then we will out on the road and get to them. Can you run as fast as ever?"

"I think I can, sir."

"Then see if I can't beat you."

Young Pat Malloy was a splendid runner, yet he had to do his best to keep his father within sight in the dark wood.

When they reached the old wall the old man paused and listened, and he soon said:

"The dogs are away after the young lady, and we are safe here for the present. Has she persuaded you to leave Ireland at once?"

"She has not, sir."

"Then you won't go?"

"I will not, sir; and I want to tell you right here that there is no use in talking to me on that subject until you tell me why Sir Rudolph Talbot wants to put me out of the way."

"I can't tell you anything about it, you mad, stubborn boy, as it isn't my secret."

"Whose secret is it then, sir?"

"Whether I know it or not, I will never tell it to you without she gives me leave."

"Why can't you tell me?"

"Because I took a solemn oath that I would never mention it to a living soul, and I must keep it. As I told you before, mad boy, you will be the death of me if you don't leave this place."

"Then why don't you leave here yourself, father?"

"Because I can't while you are around. Don't be bothering me now, but let us get away to your friends."

The old man sprang over the wall as he spoke, and his son was soon beside him, saying:

"What am I to do about the horse, as it belonged to Tom Bodkin?"

"Let Tom Bodkin get it back, then."

"I'm blamed if I am not going to get that horse back tonight if I die for it."

And without waiting for his father's sanction in the wild enterprise he meditated, the impetuous lad sprang over the wall into the wood again.

The old man darted after him and seized him by the shoulders, crying:

"You are mad entirely. If you go in there after the horse now, you are lost forever. Tom Bodkin can get him again in the morning by sending for him."

"Tom Bodkin is not going to get into a scrape with Sir Rudolph Talbot on my account," replied the young man, in

CHAPTER XV.

PAT MALLOY IN HIS NEW DISGUISE.

Old Malloy darted on through the woods, but Pat Malloy waited to embrace the beautiful young girl, while he whispered into her ear:

"Dear Miss Eva, I will never forget you the longest day I live."

determined tones. "Let me go, father, as I insist that I am my own master now."

The half crazy old man clutched Pat fiercely, as he hissed forth:

"I have a good mind to knock you senseless and take you away to your friends."

As if fearing that the old man would put the threat into effect, Pat Malloy broke away from him with a desperate effort, and darted away toward the cottage.

The horse which had been found by Sir Rudolph's followers was the same good animal which he rode over the gap on a former occasion, and he knew that Tom Bodkin prized him very much.

The mere fact of the horse being found in the woods of Talbot would direct suspicion against the young farmer, and it is very probable that the old knight would hold him for trespassing.

"The mad boy is bound to be his own ruin, and his mother will curse me for not saving him. Oh, if she would only come to Ireland before they kill him on us, I would then have my revenge and I could die happy."

Young Pat Malloy did not have the slightest idea as to how he should regain his horse after darting away from his father, but he grew calmer as he ran along, and he soon formed a plan which he determined to put into effect, if possible.

On nearing the gate he advanced more cautiously, and he soon perceived the horse standing near the cottage in charge of two men.

Drawing back for some distance, the bold fellow stole out on the road again and flung himself down in the dust as he said to himself:

"I'll try the runaway dodge on them."

As the horse was well trained, Pat Malloy had left him quietly grazing in a small grove near the cottage, knowing that he would come at his call at any time.

There was a light in the cottage as the young fellow approached the gate, and he raised his voice aloud, crying:

"Hallo, in there."

"What do you want?" demanded one of the men holding the horse.

"That's my horse you got in there, I think. The rascal ran away with me a couple of miles beyond here and gave me an ugly fall. Open the gate and let me have him, please."

"We can't open the gate, as we haven't the key. If you want your horse you had better come in after him, sir."

"Very well, my good fellow."

Pat ran along until he found a broken place in the wall, and he then sprang into the park, crying:

"I hope the rascal is tamed down now, but how in the mischief am I going to get him out of here?"

"You will have to jump him back over the wall."

Putting his hand in his pocket, Pat Malloy drew forth some silver and handed it to one of the men, saying:

"I am much obliged to you for catching the horse, and he must have got in here through the broken wall along the road."

"As we caught the horse in the park, you must wait, sir, until you see Sir Rudolph Talbot."

Pat Malloy felt that it was time for prompt and vigorous action, and, drawing back suddenly, he let fly at the two fellows with his right and left, and they both went sprawling to the ground.

They were on their feet again almost on the instant, however, and just as the active youth sprang up on the saddle.

Yelling for assistance one of them seized the bridle while the other made a grab at Pat's leg as he yelled out:

"Help, help, and we have got him!"

The young fellow had retained his riding whip, and down it fell on the man who held the bridle, as Pat cried:

"How dare you rascals try to stop me from taking my own horse?"

The other man was endeavoring to pull Pat from the saddle, when out from behind the cottage darted a tall figure, and then a well known voice fell on the young man's ear crying:

"I'll fix the rascals, and out over the wall with you as fast as you can."

"It was Pat's father who thus spoke, and as he did so he let fly with a club which he held in his hand, and down went the young man's assailants as if they had been mere playthings in his hands.

Pat turned to the gate again, just as Baldwin and three or four of his men dashed down the path toward them.

The old man saw that the daring youth was about to face the horse over the gate, and he sprang at the bridle and turned the animal out of the path, crying:

"Do you want to kill yourself and the horse going over the gate on such a dark night as this? Come along this way and we will find an easy place to get out."

The old man darted ahead along the wall, and Pat galloped after him, while Baldwin sang out:

"Pull up there, or we will fire!"

"Fire and be hanged to you, as I am only taking my own horse that ran away with me."

"I give you fair warning again, and I will fire if you don't stop this minute."

A mocking laugh was Pat's only reply, and that laugh was heard by Sir Rudolph Talbot as he was hastening after the others, and he cried aloud:

"Fire on the rascal, and see that your aim is certain."

Old Malloy heard that order, and wild was his voice as it rang out in the wood, crying:

"My aim will be certain one of those days, Sir Rudolph Talbot, and you will be my mark!"

CHAPTER XVI.

COMING TO A CRISIS.

Pat Malloy and his father were soon out on the road and hastening toward where they had left their friends in ambush, while on after them pressed Sir Rudolph and his detectives in vain pursuit.

On hearing the shots fired in the wood Tom Bodkin and his companions hastened in the direction, but they were too late to take part in the affray.

Being perfectly satisfied with the night's work so far, Pat Malloy made up his mind to retire from the scene on meeting his friends, and he turned to his father to request him to accompany him, when he discovered that the old man had again disappeared in the dark woods of Talbot.

On reaching the farmhouse that night it was again decided that Pat Malloy should change his disguise, and on the next morning he appeared about the farmhouse as a common laborer.

The persevering youth was engaged around the stables when his friend came out and informed him that an old woman wished to see him in the kitchen.

Pat Malloy entered the kitchen as if in search of something there, and he cast a careless glance at the old woman, who was seated at a large fire, as he said to her:

"A fine day, my good woman."

The old woman started on hearing the voice and inquired in very cautious tones:

"Are we alone here?"

"What brought you here in this trim, my——"

"Hush, hush, and don't speak so loud," interrupted the old woman. "Are you certain that we cannot be overheard here?"

"I am very certain that there are none but friends around here, and that you can speak freely. What's wrong at the castle, my dear young lady, that you should come here in that disguise?"

The old woman was no other than Eva Talbot herself, and Pat Malloy could see that she was in an extreme state of agitation.

"Everything is wrong," she replied. "My father knows that I met you in the wood last night, and he is furious with me."

"I am sorry for that," answered Pat, as he seized the hand of the beautiful girl. "How did you manage to come here at all?"

"My maid helped me, and so did Dora. I came to warn you that you will be arrested today for assaulting the gamekeepers in the wood last night. The fellows were detectives, but they are pretending to be gamekeepers now, and they are very bitter against you."

Pat smiled as he replied:

"I think I am able to defy them. Would you know me in this disguise, Eva?"

"I would know you in any disguise when I hear your voice. I also want to tell you that you and your friends are accused of making away with two of the old gamekeepers, who have been missing for two days. Detective Baldwin and his fellows are out after you now, and you may expect them here at any moment."

"Let them rascals come and find me if they can; but I want to ask you about yourself."

"Oh, father is furious with me for daring to meet you, and he is going to send me away to England with Dora Bodkin this very day."

"And don't you want to go?"

"Why should I want to go, you great rogue, when I am dying to remain here and see what comes of all this plotting and mystery about you?"

"Did your father give you any hint why he is so down on me, young lady?"

"He did not, but I have made inquiries of an old woman who has been living in the castle all her life, and though she wouldn't tell me much, I think I have a clew to the mystery."

"Will you tell me what the clew is, my dear young lady, if you can?"

"I dare not tell you anything about it, as I would be betraying my own father."

Tom Bodkin entered the kitchen in an excited manner at the moment and cast a suspicious glance at the old woman, while he beckoned Pat Malloy aside and hurriedly whispered to him:

"Sir Rudolph Talbot and a lot of his men are riding this way, and I think that they are after you. Who is that old woman?"

"She is a friend."

"Oh, gracious me, what shall I do if my father discovers me here?"

"Miss Eva Talbot!" exclaimed Tom Bodkin. "What in the mischief brings you here?"

"The young lady came here to warn me that they are after me," answered Pat Malloy. "You must manage to keep her from her father, my good friend."

"Take your seat there again, Miss Eva, and compose yourself. I did not know you in your very clever disguise, and I am sure your father won't if he does not hear your voice."

The brave girl recovered her full courage and she took the seat by the fire as she answered:

"I do not fear for myself, but I dread father meeting with Mr. Malloy again."

"Don't trouble about me, my dear girl, as I am able to take care of myself."

The two young men then strolled out toward the stables, and they could see Rudolph and his party riding up the lane to the farmhouse.

Detective Baldwin was riding beside the old knight as they approached, while his men behind him were keeping a sharp lookout, as if to guard against any one escaping from the premises.

Sir Rudolph rode on until he reached the gate, and Tom Bodkin flung it open as he cried in sarcastic tones:

"Welcome, Sir Rudolph. Why am I honored with such a visit this morning???"

"We are here after that young rascal you are harboring, Bodkin, and I can tell you that you will get into very serious trouble if you do not give him up. I have a warrant to search all your premises, and you will resist me at your peril."

"Sir Rudolph, I am not in the habit of harboring rascals, and I have no intention of resisting you and the fellows with you. You are at liberty to search where you please, but I warn you that you must not offend or insult any of my people."

The great detective sprang from his horse also, and entered the house by the kitchen, three of his men following him, while the others behind rode toward the stables and out-houses.

About a dozen of his men remained on horseback in the yard, as if ready to give pursuit should any one attempt to escape from the premises.

Sir Rudolph also dismounted, as he said to young Bodkin:

"I am satisfied that the young rascal known as Pat Malloy is concealed around here, and——"

A cry from the detective in the kitchen interrupted the speech, and the old knight hastened to the door, crying:

"Have you got the rascal, Baldwin?"

"I think I have, sir," answered the detective, as he dragged the pretended old woman out of the kitchen.

"I am certain that this is the rascal, and you drag off the hood, Sir Rudolph."

The old knight sprang forward and seized the hood on his daughter's head, while young Bodkin stepped forward to interfere, as he cried:

"Have a care, Sir Rudolph, how you molest any one in my house."

A cry of astonishment and rage burst from the old man as he recognized his daughter, while the detective drew back as if ashamed of the part he had played in the exposure.

Stamping with rage and shaking his clenched fist, he demanded:

"What is the meaning of this masquerading, you wretched girl?"

"Father, you are aware what I said to you last night, and I now tell you that I came here in this disguise to warn young Malloy that you were after him."

"I will disown you, miserable girl."

While this scene was being enacted Pat Malloy left the stable and he was approaching the group around the young girl when Detective Baldwin sprang at him, crying:

"This is our prisoner."

"Kill the rascal if he resists," cried Sir Rudolph.

Pat Malloy did resist, and Tom Bodkin sprang to his aid also.

Four or five of the young farmer's followers ran out of the stable to assist their young master, but the detectives on horseback pointed their revolvers at them, crying:

"Stand back or we will shoot you down!"

After a brief but fierce struggle Pat Malloy broke away from the detectives and sprang on one of their horses, as he cried:

"You will never drag me back to that infernal castle again."

The brave lad was then about to face his horse out through the gate, when a closed carriage drawn by two horses drove furiously into the yard, and out from it sprang a woman wearing a heavy veil.

The woman sprang before them and cried in thrilling tones:

"Villains, do not murder my son before my eyes. Sir Rudolph Talbot, the hour has come when justice must be done. Do you know me?"

Sir Rudolph gasped out:

"My cousin's wife!"

Pat Malloy sprang from his horse and ran to embrace the strange woman as he cried:

"Dear mother, did you come to Ireland?"

"Yes, yes, my son, and the hour is coming when I can speak freely at last."

"You can soon speak now!" cried a hoarse voice from the carriage, as a bent figure tumbled out of the vehicle into the yard.

That bent figure was Pat Malloy's father, and as he lay stretched on the ground all present could see that he was in a dying state.

Pat Malloy and his mother sprang to raise the head of the dying man, who glared fiercely at Sir Rudolph Talbot, as he groaned forth:

"Cousin Rudolph, your men shot me in the wood last night when I was saving my son. I meant to kill you before I died, for you have been the cause of my life-long trouble, but I leave my son to avenge me. Dear wife, I will soon be dead, and then you can speak freely. See that justice is done to my son and to the scoundrel who robbed me and you."

The dying man gasped for breath, his head fell back on his wife's breast, and all was over.

Sir Rudolph stared at the dead and the living as he gasped forth:

"It is my cousin Philip!"

Pat Malloy's mother glared up at the old knight, and then kissed her husband's lips ere she exclaimed:

"Yes—yes, Rudolph Talbot, this is your cousin Philip, the rightful owner of your title and estates, which you robbed him of. Thank heaven, I came here in time to save his son, my own dear boy, and now my lips are sealed no longer."

The old knight drew back as if gasping for breath, and he would have fallen had not his daughter sprang to his support, as she cried:

"What is the meaning of all this, father? Send those men away, as I am certain that you will not need their aid now."

Tom Bodkin saw that the old knight was about to faint with agitation, and he sprang to his support, crying:

"Help me to take him into the house, some of you. We don't want any strangers around here."

The last words were addressed to Baldwin and his fellows, and the old knight gasped forth:

"You can go now, Baldwin."

CHAPTER XVII.

PAT MALLOY HEARS THE SECRET.

"Will I proceed now, Rudolph Talbot?"

The woman heretofore known as Mrs. Malloy addressed the question to the old knight, as he was seated in an easy-chair

in the best room in the farmhouse, about an hour after the detectives had left the premises.

Eva Talbot, young Pat Malloy, Tom Bodkin and his mother were also present and in an inner room lay the dead body of the man who was known in America as old Pat Malloy.

The old knight was as pale as death, and he gasped forth his reply in feeble tones, saying:

"Yes, proceed now and tell the whole story, as I am sick and tired of the suspense I have endured since I learned that your son was in this neighborhood."

"How did you know that he was my son?" asked Mrs. Malloy.

"Because he is the dead image of his father, when we were boys together," replied the old knight. "Besides, I saw that locket he wears while he was lying asleep, and then I was certain of it. Tell your story, woman, and let us be done with the wretched business."

"It may be just as well to tell you all that I am the daughter of a respectable merchant who lived in Dublin years ago. When I was only a young girl I met a young student of Trinity College in my native city, and I fell in love with him.

"Although he was a gentleman born, and his father was a knight and owner of large estates here in Galway, Philip Talbot was a rough, good-natured, passionate young man himself, and he was more given to fox hunting, horse racing and such sports than to any of the finer accomplishments pertaining to the young men of the day.

"Yet I loved the rough, good-natured student for all that, and two years after meeting him we were secretly married. The only one who knew of that marriage was my maid, who is since dead, and Rudolph Talbot here, who is my husband's first cousin.

"Soon after our marriage my husband took me to live in a cottage not many miles from here, as he declared that his father had threatened to cast him off if he did not wed a certain young lady living in the neighborhood.

"One day my husband came to me in a great state of excitement, declaring that he had killed a man in a quarrel while out hunting, and that he would be certainly hung if the officers caught him.

"He also told me that the only witness to the quarrel was Rudolph Talbot, his cousin, and while he was yet speaking that person entered our cottage."

Mrs. Malloy, as we will continue to call her, cast a piteous glance at Sir Rudolph at the moment, and he shook his head impatiently, saying:

"Go on with your story, madam, and tell the worst you can about me."

"I will not tell all I can, sir, for your daughter's sake there. It will be sufficient to say that my husband was prevailed upon by you to fly to England with me under an assumed name. My husband swore that he would never return to Ireland again, and that he would never claim the title and estates of Talbot, if his cousin would keep his secret."

"He didn't keep his oath," groaned the old knight, "and you didn't either, woman."

"I did keep my oath, Rudolph Talbot," answered Pat's mother, in stern tones. "If you remember, I only swore that I would never declare who I was while my husband lived, and that even then I would be silent if you treated my son in a proper manner."

"Yet you sent him here to spy on me," retorted the old knight.

"I did not do anything of the kind, sir."

"Then why did he come here?"

"I came here by mere accident," answered Pat Malloy.

"And would I not be justified in breaking the oath," cried Mrs. Malloy, "when I heard that you imprisoned my son in

that old castle, and that you even threatened to take his life?"

"I only wanted him to leave the country," answered the baffled old man.

"And you didn't succeed," replied Pat Malloy, with a defiant smile.

Speaking for the first time during the interview, Eva Talbot addressed her father, saying:

"Do I understand, father, that this young man's father was the rightful owner of your title and estate?"

The old man groaned again ere he answered:

"He was, Eva; but he assigned all his rights over to me on condition that I would keep his secret about the murder I witnessed. I was the next heir after him, and he was actually dead in her eyes of the law, as he would have been hung if I had betrayed him. As I did not hear from him since he went to England with his wife and child, I believed that they were all dead long ago."

The woman known as Mrs. Malloy cast a stern glance at the old knight as she said to him:

"Do not forget, sir, that you sent the officers of the law after us in England, and that you compelled us to fly to America. My poor husband was rough and passionate, but you know right well that he did not intend to kill that man that day in the hunting field."

"That wouldn't save him from the gallows at any rate," retorted the old knight.

"My husband suffered enough for his crime, as he never spent a happy day since, as my son here can tell you."

"We will not speak of that now, mother," said Pat Malloy, as he bent his eyes on the old knight, "and let us come to an understanding."

"What understanding can we come to?" demanded Eva's father.

"If I understand right," answered Pat Malloy, "I am the legal heir to the title and estates now held by you."

"That is the truth, my son, and I have the documents to prove it."

"There is no use in our fighting about this business, sir, and though you have tried to injure me, I am perfectly willing to forgive and forget on one or two conditions."

"What are your conditions, young man?"

"I am perfectly willing that you keep on holding the estate until you die, providing that you promise me to give me Eva here as my wife."

The old man shrugged his shoulders and replied:

"I suppose you have both set your hearts on that?"

"I think we have, sir. Are you willing, Eva?"

"I am perfectly willing, indeed."

"Then I suppose I must consent," grunted the old knight. "What more do you require?"

"I request that you give permission to Tom Bodkin here to marry Dora, his cousin."

"Well, well, I suppose that I must consent to that also."

"In the meantime," continued Pat Malloy, "you must give me half the revenue of the estates until you die, and then I will take possession. Besides that, you must send your rascally son out of the country, as he is a disgrace to us all. If you refuse, mother and I will at once take steps for claiming our rights."

The old knight was compelled to submit to the terms thus offered to him, and he returned to the castle in a very depressed state of mind, while his daughter remained at the farmhouse with Pat's mother.

On that very night young Oscar Talbot was shot dead by some persons unknown, and his father died in a fit of rage on hearing of the accident.

* * * * *

About three years after the night on which Pat Malloy was

cast ashore on the Irish coast a merry gathering assembled in the old Talbot Castle, which was brilliantly illuminated for the occasion.

Sir Patrick Talbot, heretofore known as Pat Malloy, was celebrating his twenty-first birthday that night and all his friends and tenants were gathered around him.

Among those friends and tenants were Tom Bodkin and his fair wife Dora, while Shamus O'Connor and his sister were also welcome guests.

On that very night the beautiful Eva Talbot became the young man's wife, while his mother looked on with a smiling face while she said to herself:

"This is the happiest night I ever spent in my life, and I only hope that his poor father will see him from the other world, and how proud he would be of the poor boy who was so long known as Pat Malloy."

THE END.

Read "JACK WRIGHT AND HIS ELECTRIC SEA GHOST; OR, A STRANGE UNDER-WATER JOURNEY," by "No-name," which will be the next number (282) of "Pluck and Luck."

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